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BORDER DISPUTE

Congress wants PM to speak on LAC row

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'Electricity trade could be a game changer'

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Iran at a political crossroads

The core of the Iranian order is likely to endure

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DRAWING FIRST BLOOD

Kuldeep, Axar spin India to victory

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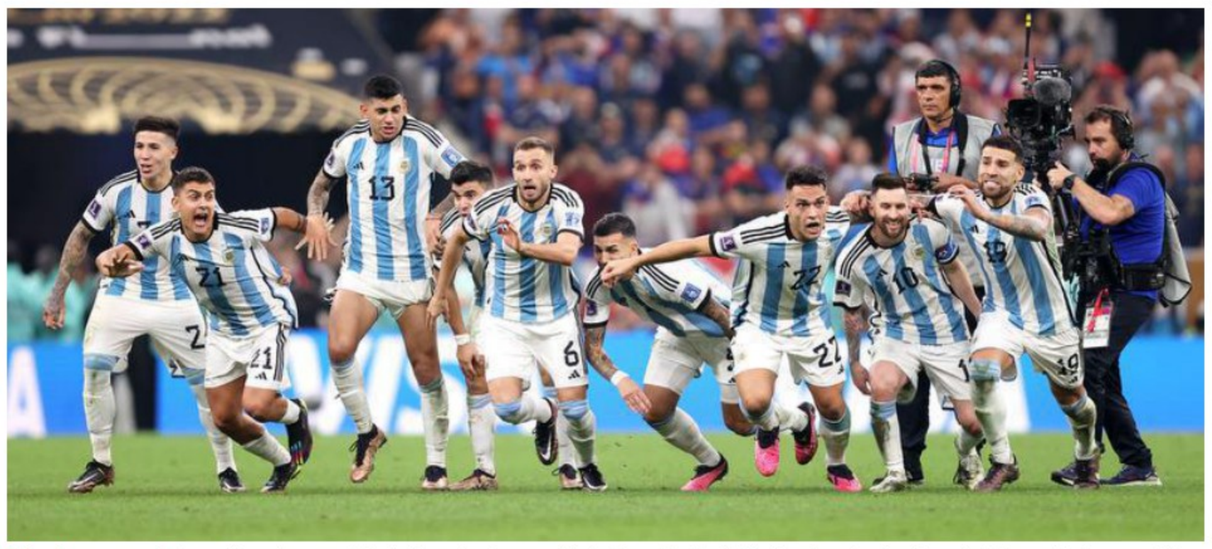

Winning moment: Argentina players celebrate the winning penalty by Gonzalo Montiel in the the shoot-out against France that secured the South American team's third FIFA World Cup title. GETTY IMAGES

Messi's Argentina on top of the world

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

On a star-kissed night in the bejewelled Lusail Stadium, Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe – the standout stars of this World Cup – scored two and three goals respectively to deliver a memorable final that will be forever etched in the memories of those who were here. Argentina's 36-year wait was finally over with a 4-2 victory in a shootout after being tied 3-3 at the end of the extra-time.

Argentina took an early lead when Messi scored from the penalty after Angel Di Maria was brought down inside the box.

Di Maria, back in the line-up after playing just eight minutes in the quarterfinals, soon added the second for the South Americans as the French defence was nowhere to be found and all seemed lost for *Les Bleus*.

Hitting back

The twists and the turns arrived in a span of two second-half minutes when Argentina conceded twice – first from a Mbappe penalty and then another from the same man. Messi's goal in the extra-time was again cancelled off by his PSG teammate's hat-trick strike. The winner was picked after Argentina 'keeper Emiliano Martinez saved one penalty and saw another sail wide in the shootout, while the Argentine players converted the four efforts they took.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 13

Citizenship path to be eased for 6 minority groups from 3 nations

Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists, Jains from Pak., Afghanistan and Bangladesh will be allowed to produce expired passports, visas

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union government is all set to ease grant of citizenship to members of six minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh whose passports and visas have ceased to be valid during their stay in India.

The Home Ministry is expected to revamp the citizenship portal to accept passports and visas with expired validity as supporting documents to process citizenship application of Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists and Jains from the three countries, says a government source.

The portal run by the Ministry currently accepts expired passports as supporting documents only for those Hindu and Sikh applicants from Pakistan and Afghanistan who entered India before December 31, 2009.

Hindu Singh Sodha, president of Seemant Lok Sanghathan, which works for the rights of minorities from Pakistan, says even those eligible are affected.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Waiting in queue

According to reports, there are 18,000 registered Pakistani Hindus who await citizenship

- Home Ministry informed Parliament in December 2021 that from 2018 to 2021, the government received 8,244 citizenship applications from the minority groups and granted citizenship to 3,117 applicants
- According to the Ministry's annual report 2021-22, in the COVID-19 affected year of 2021, from April-December, as many as 1,414 citizenship certificates were granted to members of the minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh

NEARBY

Dalit groups divided on quota

BENGALURU
Days after the State government announced setting up of a Cabinet sub-committee to study the implementation of the A.J. Sadashiva Commission recommendations on internal reservation, Dalit organisations seem to be divided over the issue. » Page 3

Boy accidentally kills brother

BENGALURU
In a tragic incident, a seven-year-old boy was allegedly shot dead by his elder brother while he pulled the trigger of a country-made gun accidentally. » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 4 & 5

Savarkar portrait likely to be unveiled in Assembly

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The 10-day winter session, which is beginning on Monday in Belagavi, appears to be set for an ideological tussle with a portrait of Hindutva ideologue V.D. Savarkar reportedly getting ready to be unveiled in the Legislative Assembly at Suvarna Soudha here.

While there is no official announcement, seven portraits of prominent personalities, including Savarkar, are reportedly ready to be unveiled in the Assembly Hall in this session. The portrait issue might overtake several other contentious issues that were expected to generate heated debate.

In fact, it is being seen as a strategic counter-attack by the BJP at the Opposition that was preparing to put the government on the mat during the session.

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Board Members for the Panel

Dr. S. Y. Quraishi
IAS Retd., Former Chief Election Commissioner

Prof. Dr. Pushpesh Pant
Ex. Dean, SIS, JNU, Delhi

Vikas Swarup
Former Secretary (West) and High Commissioner to Canada

Dr Vikram Singh
IPS Retd, Ex DGP - Uttar Pradesh

Key Sessions to Attend

Ambassador Amit Das Gupta
IFS Retd., Former Ambassador, Philippines
International Relations & India's Foreign Policy
19th Dec, 22 | 11:30 AM

Dr Sanjeev Kr Lohia
IRSE Retd. Former MD & CEO IRSDC
How to handle Engineering Background Questions in Interview
19th Dec, 22 | 3:00 PM

Com. Uday Bhaskar
Director, Society for Policy Studies
Internal Security & Defence - Indian Perspective
23rd Dec, 22 | 1:00 PM

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Suspected measles outbreak in parts of Mehsana, Gujarat

91 The number of suspected measles cases in parts of Mehsana in Gujarat. The cases were identified during a surveillance carried out in the last one month, according to a health department official. One of the reasons behind the likely upsurge in suspected measles cases was attributed to the resistance to vaccination in the region. PTI

Troops to fill in for the drivers and border staff on strike in U.K.

1,200 The number of troops the U.K. is sending to fill in for ambulance drivers and border staff as multiple public sector unions go on strike the week before Christmas. The U.K.'s intense strike wave is in response to a cost-of-living crisis driven by soaring prices in the wake of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. AP

Zippo plans to expand in offline channels in 2023 for faster growth

50 In percentage, the expected growth in sales for the lighter company, Zippo, in India in 2023. The company gets around 60-70% of sales from e-commerce channels in India and is also expanding its presence in offline channels, where it expects faster growth in 2023, said Zippo Global Marketing Associate Vice President Lucas Johnson. PTI

Vacancies being filled in govt. depts across Jammu & Kashmir

15,000 The number of vacancies that have been filled in government departments in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three years, while the selection process for 8,000 more was in progress, according to Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (SSB) chairman Rajesh Sharma. PTI

Major investments in poll-bound Meghalaya and Tripura

6,800 In ₹ crore, the amount being invested in projects in Tripura and Meghalaya. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the poll-bound States and inaugurated these projects. The Prime Minister's Office said that the projects include a wide array of sectors. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Decriminalisation of offences under GST

Why was there an emphasis on criminal jurisprudence behind the penal provisions in the GST law? Should imposing penal laws be discouraged to attract investors and businesses? What are the recommendations of the 48th GST Council meeting?

EXPLAINER

G. S. Bajpai
Vikram Karuna

The story so far:

The 48th GST Council meeting was held on December 17. The GST Council chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recommended to decriminalise certain offences under Section 132 of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017. Some other recommendations, for the facilitation of trade, include an increased threshold of the amount of tax for prosecution, reducing the compounding amount in GST etc.

What was previously criminalised under GST?

Since the implementation of GST, there has been a significant increase in tax evasion, with numerous cases of taxpayers using multiple strategies to avoid indirect tax coming to light. Tax authorities are actively using technology and data from e-way bills and GST returns to check evasion. The GST law establishes stringent penalties and guidelines that taxpayers must abide by in order to ensure smooth intrastate or interstate trade of goods and to combat corruption and maintain an effective tax collection system.

The GST Law provides for two different types of penalties. They may be both concurrent and simultaneous. The department authorities have the authority to impose monetary fines and the seizure of goods as penalties for violating statutory provisions. Criminal penalties include imprisonment and fines, which are also provided by GST Law but which can only be awarded in a criminal court following a prosecution.

Sections 122 to 131 of the CGST Act of 2017 contain provisions relating to penalties, while Sections 132 to 138 contains provisions relating to prosecution and compounding. The amount of tax evaded, the amount of Input Tax Credit (ITC) improperly claimed or used, or the amount of refund improperly claimed determines the length of the prison sentence. The aforementioned section further divides offences into those that are cognisable and bailable and those that are not cognisable and bailable. Additionally, it is observed that many non-compliances fall under both categories of penalties, prosecution, and compounding.

Which are the offences under GST law which attract IPC and CrPC provisions?

Under the CGST Act, if a group of two persons or more agree to commit an illegal act like tax evasion, fraud etc. they are held liable under the act of criminal conspiracy. While Section 120A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), defines criminal conspiracy, Section 120B deals with punishment for the same and Section 46 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) deals with how the arrest is made.

Section 69 of the CGST Act provides the power to arrest a person by an order of a commissioner when he believes that a person has committed any offence under Section 132. Section 67 of CrPC states that if a summons is issued outside the local authority, a duplicate copy of that summons should be send to the Magistrate of that outside authority to serve the summons. Section 165 of CrPC deals with the search by the police officer while Section 67 of the CGST Act defines that only an officer not below the rank of joint commissioner can authorise in writing an inspection or search.

Meeting in progress: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs the 48th meeting of the GST Council virtually, in New Delhi, on December 17. PTI

Why did Parliament include penal provisions in the GST law?

While replying to the queries of the members of the Rajya Sabha on April 6, 2017, then Union Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley laid emphasis on criminal jurisprudence behind the penal provisions in the GST law. He said that "this (arrest provisions) was thoroughly debated by all the Finance Ministers (Union and States), and there were clearly two views at the very outset. The first view was, 'why arrest'? The second view was, supposing a man defrauds ₹100 crore, is the State government powerless? And he has no assets to recover it from; what do you do? What is the kind of deterrent? And then, the wisdom of the Council itself was that they chose a middle path....So, up to a fraud of two crore rupees [now five crore rupees, after CGST (Amendment) Act, 2018], no arrest....only in the very big fraud cases where a man forges a complete transaction, it is only then that the arrest is made. And this was the actual division – should you have no arrest or should you have arrest only in rare cases and with very stringent conditions".

He also explained how compounding of offences and arrest co-exist, "Arrest is for the offence and compounding is when the prosecution is filed, which is the next stage. So, after arrest, you are on bail or not on bail; when the prosecution is filed, there is a separate chapter which gives you the option of asking for a compounding on such payment as the rules may themselves prescribe".

What has been recommended to decriminalise the GST offences?

The 48th GST Council meeting has recommended various measures to decriminalise the GST offences such as raising the minimum threshold of tax amount for launching prosecution under GST from one crore to two crore, except for the offence of issuance of invoices without supply of goods or services or both, reducing the compounding amount from the present range of 50 to 150% of the tax amount to the range of 25 to 100%, and decriminalising certain offences specified under Section 132 of the CGST Act, 2017, such as obstructing or preventing any officer from doing his duties, deliberate tempering of material evidence and failure to supply information.

What will be the impact of decriminalisation?

The GST is a novel taxation system that includes a number of globally unprecedented features. The law is still developing and is in its infancy which makes the same difficult and uncertain to enforce. There are instances of conflict between court decisions and rulings. The government is still working to streamline the laws. In comparison to the pre-GST era, the GST compliance process with granular reporting is noticeably more onerous.

Therefore, it is important to recognise that imposing penal provisions in an ambiguous ecosystem significantly alters how businesses perceive risk and uncertainty, directly impacting their ability to conduct business. The law already contains sufficient penalties that serve as a deterrent against tax evasion. Investors may be discouraged by the fear of criminal sanctions in small, trivial, and petty matters, even before their engagement in any business activity or investment.

What are the other recommended measures to facilitate trade?

Two major recommendations include refunding unregistered persons and facilitating e-commerce for micro enterprises.

There was no procedure for claim of refund of tax borne by unregistered buyers in cases where the contract/agreement for supply of services, like construction of flat/house and long-term insurance policy, is cancelled and the time period of issuance of credit note by the concerned supplier is over. The Council recommended amendment in CGST Rules, 2017, along with issuance of a circular, to prescribe the procedure for filing application of refund by the unregistered buyers in such cases.

The GST Council in its 47th meeting had also granted in-principle approval for allowing unregistered suppliers and composition taxpayers to make intra-state supply of goods through E-Commerce Operators (ECOs), subject to certain conditions. The Council approved the amendments in the GST Act and GST Rules, along with issuance of relevant notifications, to enable the same. Further, considering the time required for development of the requisite functionality on the portal as well as for providing sufficient time for preparedness by the ECOs, the Council has recommended that the scheme may be implemented from October 2023.

What next?

If the above decriminalisation of GST offences are implemented with adequate checks, then prosecution, arrest and imprisonment in GST cases would only be in the rarest of rare cases of hard, habitual, deliberate defaulters and blatant specific fraudulent practices. Other minor grievances may be dealt with in other resolution mechanisms such as Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism, private ruling and mediation, faceless adjudication and appeals, etc.

There were speculations that this GST council meeting will also deliberate on issues like the establishment of a GST Appellate Tribunal, Group of Ministers Reports on Pan Masala, Gutka and Group of Ministers Reports on online gaming, casinos and horse racing. However, none of these were discussed.

G. S. Bajpai is Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab where Vikram Karuna is an Assistant Professor.

THE GIST

The 48th GST Council meeting was held on December 17. The GST Council chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recommended to decriminalise certain offences under Section 132 of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017.

While Sections 122 to 131 of the CGST Act of 2017 contain provisions relating to penalties, Sections 132 to 138 contains provisions relating to prosecution and compounding. The amount of tax evaded, the amount of Input Tax Credit (ITC) improperly claimed or used, or the amount of refund improperly claimed determines the length of the prison sentence.

Imposing penal provisions in an ambiguous ecosystem significantly alters how businesses perceive risk and uncertainty, directly impacting their ability to conduct business. The law already contains sufficient penalties that serve as a deterrent against tax evasion. Investors may be discouraged by the fear of criminal sanctions in small, trivial, and petty matters, even before their engagement in any business activity or investment.

BBMP's COVID-19 bulletin clocks 1,000th edition

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its arrival in 2020, marked a shift from normalcy that is unlikely to be forgotten any time soon.

Today, it is all but a bad memory as the number of cases being reported in India has reduced, the masks are off and life has gotten back to what it used to be. On Sunday, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) COVID-19 War Room, with its daily bulletin, clocked its 1,000th day – a reminder of the pandemic, its suffering and all that was lost and learnt through it.

Officers involved in the establishment of the War Room recalled how it was the first such set up in the country in March 2020 by the then BBMP Commissioner B.H. Anil Kumar. "This was where the model operational framework – tools, strategies, documents – for COVID-19 crisis management was piloted, demonstrated, compiled, and shared for replication across the country. The BBMP COVID-19 War Room received the Innovation Award in India Smart Cities Awards Contest (ISAC) 2020 for development of Index Application for data integration. Bengaluru was rated last year as one of the six top cities of the world for COVID management by the World Economic Forum," said Hephsiba Rani Korlapati, the then Managing Director, Bengaluru, Smart City who was posted as Special Officer, BBMP COVID-19 War Room.

"The 'leaving no citizen uninformed approach' was identified as the objective at the BBMP COVID-19 War Room in March 2020. The bulletin is also distinct for the kind of inclusivity of ideas and processes of inputs and feedback received from Resident Welfare Associations, social media platforms, and the public at large. It also draws heavily from the suggestions of public health experts and academia, mainly the Indian Institute of Science," she said, adding that it was initiated in the fourth week of March 2020 and is being issued daily in English and Kannada too. On 09.10.2020, the 200th bulletin was issued. Ms. Korlapati said the review by the then Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka T.M. Vijay Bhaskar on a daily basis was critical.

Now, with the dust having settled on the pandemic in some sense, how do the war room and bulletin hold relevance? "The relevance is in the lesson we have learnt – of comprehensive planning and not just technology. There was human and artificial intelligence involved. It's a collaborative effort and it should happen on a day to day basis," she said.

When Bengaluru drowned in record rains amid civic and political apathy

Downpour in the last week of August and first week of September brought Bengaluru, especially the IT corridor and the adjoining areas of east Bengaluru along the ORR to south-east Bengaluru, to a standstill. Various parts of the city were flooded and nothing was spared

REWIND 2022

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

A file photo of inundated Outer Ring Road in Bengaluru on August 30, 2022.

An inundated Outer Ring Road (ORR) and Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway will perhaps be one of the defining images of 2022 as the city drowned in record rains along with civic and political apathy.

Downpour in the last week of August and first week of September brought Bengaluru, especially the IT corridor and the adjoining areas from east Bengaluru along the ORR to south-east Bengaluru, to a standstill. Various parts of the city were flooded and nothing was spared – tech parks, posh layouts, offices, major roads and houses. The city not just made headlines on rain-related damage, but also broke a 75-year old record.

On September 4, according to the India Meteorological Department, the city received 131.6 mm of rainfall. This, according to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), was the third heaviest spell in the city for a 24-hour period in September in the past 75 years.

Bengaluru, home to hundreds of lakes – both alive and dead – also saw many lakes, including the Bellandur lake, breach, affecting areas around while also exposing the illegal encroachments of lakes in the city, resulting in a series of anti-encroachment drives of storm-water drains (SWDs). The BBMP said a total of 162 lakes were filled to the brim, of which 126 breached this year after rain. Various experts and even residents' welfare groups alleged that the sudden flooding was a result of the civic body's mismanagement which led to the encroachment of lakes and the SWDs. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai also blamed illegal encroachments in the south-east zone as the reason for flooding.

A study showed that in 1,800, the city's water bodies had a cumulative capacity to hold 35 tmcft of water.

The average rainfall the city receives today is estimated to be around 15 tmcft of water and this year, it was only marginally higher. However, if most of the city's lakes are overflowing and there are floods, it only means their holding capacity has dwindled severely.

To clear the encroachments of SWDs, the Chief Minister allocated ₹300 crore and also allocated ₹1500 crore for clearing out the stagnant water.

For decades, the BBMP has been in the process of remodelling the SWD network. According to BBMP data, nearly 428 km of the city's 842-km network of SWDs has been remodelled.

BBMP's mismanagement

The areas which were flooded this year were mostly villages included to the city limits in 2007, which were at that time governed by gram panchayats and town municipalities and could not catch up with the development boom of the IT industry and continued to be mismanaged under BBMP limits.

The IT boom saw tech parks and office spaces come up in the south east zone, which made real estate companies start building residential projects and shopping malls to cater to those working here. But, the authorities concerned failed to plan the development in this region and didn't come up with any regulation and lakes and SWD were eventually misused by a nexus of realtors and politicians, experts point out.

The city's water supply was also stopped for a day after heavy rains in Mandya district flooded the pumping stations of Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), which supplies Cauvery water to Bengaluru.

Anti-encroachment drive

Days after rain reduced in the city, the BBMP started to act against the illegal encroachments of SWD and lake by using bulldozers. For a few days, the drive did happen, but stopped reportedly on the pretext of resurvey and stay orders brought by the building owners. BBMP identified encroachments in top tech parks, apartments, posh residential gated layouts and educational institutions. The civic body conducted a drive against these properties and gradually stopped the drive.

According to BBMP data submitted by Mahadevapura zone – one of the most densely developed areas over the last two decades and the worst hit by floods this year – it had 1,689 encroachments of SWDs in 2016-17, the highest for any zone by a large margin when the clearance drive began. Now, the Mahadevapura zone has only 133 encroachments left, and the rest have been cleared over the years, according to BBMP.

The BBMP in October said that they have identified 504 encroachments, excluding around 67 instances of encroachments in which the alleged encroachers have approached various courts.

Single-day losses

IT firms and banking establishments in the ORR area claimed to have incurred a loss of ₹225 crore owing to the heavy rains and flooding on August 30, said Outer Ring Road Companies' Association (ORRCA) in a letter to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

Seeking Mr. Bommai's attention to address the "appalling infrastructure" in the ORR region in particular and the city in general, ORRCA said half a million professionals were employed along the ORR region between Central Silk Board and K.R. Puram corridor.

Family accuses AI of refusing to allow pet onboard

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A family who had booked tickets to fly from Bengaluru to Delhi along with their pet dog on an Air India flight on Saturday have alleged in a video on Twitter that their pet was not allowed to board the aircraft despite having a boarding pass.

Sachin Shenoy, in the video which has gone viral, said that he along with his wife Uma, daughter Arya, and pet dog Fluffy were heading for a 12-day vacation covering various places in North India.

He said that he had booked tickets for the trip three months ago, and that he was in constant touch with airline officials as their pet was also travelling with them.

"We were supposed to board the flight to Delhi and then to Amritsar at 5.10 p.m. We had booked tickets about three months back, and we have been in constant touch with the Air India authorities on the process for travel with our pet," Mr. Shenoy said in the video. He added that while their pet weighs 4.2 kg and the bag in which she was travelling weighs about 5 kg.

"As per the rules, she can fly inside the cabin. We got all the checks done, we got all the certificates done, she was issued a boarding pass, and then we waited for four hours," he added. Mr. Shenoy alleged that the Captain did not allow the pet to board the flight. "The Captain Chopra denies entry or that is what was told to us. We also understand the flight was full and maybe they had overbooked and because of which they might have wanted us to deboard. We were told to leave our pet and go. You can fly if your pet is not flying, they said. We will not allow you to take the pet, it was as good as leaving our kid and going. Is this what travel in India is all about," Mr. Shenoy alleged.

After the video went viral, many called the airline anti-pet and questioned their pet policy. An Air India spokesperson on Sunday said that Air India has been making repeated efforts to offer Shenoy, his family members and his pet Fluffy to fly in the next available flight since Saturday. However, since then, their efforts to offer him revalidated tickets to fly with his pet have been declined by him.

Text & Context

A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (December 19, Monday), the following explainer is available:

- Decriminalisation of offences under GST
bit.ly/gstdecriminalisation

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Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, DEC. 19		
RISE	06:35	SET 17:58
RISE	02:18	SET 14:20
TUESDAY, DEC. 20		
RISE	06:36	SET 17:58
RISE	03:12	SET 15:05
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 21		
RISE	06:36	SET 17:59
RISE	04:10	SET 15:56

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	29	22
Mysuru	29	18
Bengaluru	27	18

Bengaluru Today
29°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight warm and humid. Night will be cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
29°C A dry weather to continue. Day will be slight warm and humid. Night will be cool.

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THE HINDU
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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBRANCE

1ST YEAR REMEMBRANCE

N.KAMESWARI
(Wife of Late **Dr. N.Jayaraman**)
06.01.1925 - 19.12.2021
Deeply missed by all Family Members and Friends

Karnataka Government Secretariat
Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore

No: FD / 05 / BMB / 2022 **Dated : 15-12-2022**

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT STOCK (SECURITIES)

1. Aggregate Amount : **Total Rs.4000 crore (Rs. 2000 crore (10 Year Tenure) and Rs.2000 crore (12 Year Tenure)**
2. Method of Issue : By auction, through PDO, RBI, Mumbai (Fort)
3. Date of auction : **December 20, 2022**

Government of Karnataka invites subscription to the above securities. Copies of the Notification and Application forms may be obtained from PDO, RBI, Bangalore. Non - competitive bidding facility has been introduced by RBI to encourage participation of retail investors. The Government stock up to 10% of the notified amount of the sale will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions. Sample Tender Forms and the revised scheme of Non - competitive bidding facility is available on the website **www.rbi.org.in**

Sd/-
Deputy Secretary (B&R)
Finance Department

DIPR/VCPL/3533/2022-23

Government of Karnataka Zilla Panchayat,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru
Ph.: 08262-220936 e-mail: zpedckm@rediffmail.com
Tender Notice No.:AE/08/2022-23/3nd Call Date: 15.12.2022

Tender Notice (3rd Call)

Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru invites Tenders through e-procurement related to works of Kadur, Mudigere, Tarikere and Ajjampura Taluks in Chikkamagaluru District. Maximum Amount of work is Rs. 100.00 lakhs and Minimum Amount is Rs 2.00 lakhs. Details of capability to undertake or of having implemented the works should be attached as per Standard Tender Document KW-1,2,3. For the said works the documents downloaded from e-procurement can be filled and uploaded from 15.12.2022 to 29.12.2022 up to 5.00 PM. If possible the Technical Bid will be opened on 31.12.2022 at 5.00 PM. If possible the Financial Bid will be opened on 05.01.2023 at 11.00 AM. If these days are declared as holidays then the next day will be considered. Notice can be read on www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in Further details can be obtained by contacting the case worker during office hours.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Madhu Kumar Krishnappa alias Madhu Kumar K Reddy alias Madhu Kumar K alias Madhukumar K S/o Krishnappa V R, residing at 33 Indra Mahal 1st Cross BEML Layout 5th Stage, Sachidanandanagar, R.R Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560098, changed my name to Madhu Kumar Krishnappa Reddy for all purposes in future.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KADIUM Venkat Narayana Rao S/o K Srinivasa Rao born on 22–07–1969 working at Centre for Airborne Systems(CABS), DRDO, Ministry of Defence, Belur, Yemalur Post, Bangalore, have changed my name to Kadiyam Venkata Narayana Rao and in short K V Narayana Rao vide affidavit dated 13 Dec 2022 at Bangalore

BOOKS / PERIODICALS

THAMIZH PUTTHAGA THIRUVIZHA
Date : 25.12. 2022 to 01.01.2023
Everyday : 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM
at Thiruvalluvar Arangam
Bangalore Tamil Sangam,
Annaswamy Mudaliar Road, Bengaluru-560042
For details: 94837 55974
தமிழ்ப் புத்தகத் திருவிழா 2022 பெங்களூரு

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PRAJWAL Kumar S/o Poovappa Poojary, R/at No.4, 4th Cross, Shanbhag Nagappa Layout, Behind Vijaya Bank Layout, Bilekahalli, Bangalore-560076, declare that, Prajwal Kumar and Prajwal Kumar Poojary, belongs to me, one and the same person, vide affidavit dated 16-12-2022 before Notary K.S.Giridhar, Bengaluru.

I, SUCHITHRA, R/at #1162, B H Road, Opp Bus Stand, Sri Ranga Store, Chikanayakanahally Rural, Tumakur-572214, have changed my name from Suchithra to Suchithra Indrakumar Kandikere vide affidavit dated 17-12-2022 before Notary Mamatha N.K, Bengaluru.

I, MOHAMMED Moosa Ali R/OVidya Nagar, Kalaburagi haschanged my minor son's namefrom Mohammed Izaan Ali toMuhammad Sulaiman Ali,sworn in an affidavit atEmbassy of India, Qatar videNOC 96258 dated 15/12/22

I, SUSHELA VIRGINIA MANUEL have changed my name from SUSEELA VIRGINIA MANUEL to SUSHELA VIRGINIA MANUEL, for all future purposes by affidavit dated 17–12–2022, Notarized by SESHAGIRI, Bang 43

I, 'SIMRAN D/O SYED IMTIYAZ W/O GURUPRASAD.S, R/O #158,V Pura Hobli,Yaliyura Village Channapattana Taluk,Yaliyur,Ramanagar,Karnataka–562138, Have changed my name to 'SAHANA

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 26th ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE, MAYOHALL, AT BANGALORE (CCH 20)
O.S. NO.26507/2020
BETWEEN :
M/s. ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore 560001
Represented by its Manager and Power of Attorney Holder Mr. Pramodh G.
...PLAINTIFF
AND
Mr. P.C. Jayaprakasha.,
...DEFENDANT
Summons To Defendant

Mr. P.C. Jayaprakasha., S/o Mr. Muni Venkatappa, No.21, Byrathi Bande, Sri Krishna Nagar, Kothanur Post, Poornagan School, Bangalore North, Bangalore-560077.

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs.8,66,460.06/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Four Hundred Sixty and Paise Six Only)** apart from future interest of **18% p.a.**, in **O.S. No. 26507/2020** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH-20,** Before 26th Addl. City Civil Court, Mayohall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **31st Day** of **January 2023** at 11:00 A.M. to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Ex-parte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **16th day of December, 2022.**

By Order of the Court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayohall,
Bengaluru- 560 001

FX & Co., ADVOCATES,
New No. 9, Old No. 11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
Bengaluru- 560 005

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE SUBORDINATE JUDGE, KATPADI.
O.S. No. 155 of 2022
G. Udhaya Kumar & Others.
Vs ..... Plaintiffs
G. Purushothaman & Others.
.....Defendants

R7 Malarveni, W/o. Munusamy, No.12 th cross, Amaravathi, Desulli Post,Bangarpet, Kolar – 563 162, Karnataka State.

R8 Santhi, W/o. T.Thangaraj, Thiruvani Nagar Post, Kothur, Krishnappa Compound, K.R. Puram, Bangaluru - 560 016.

The Plaintiffs filed the main suit for declaration and other reliefs before the above said court. 7th & 8th defendants of you hereby summoned to appear before the above said court in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer material questioned relating to the suit on 03-01-2023 at 10-00 'O' Clock. Also take notice that in default of your filing an address for service before the day mentioned above. You are liable to have your defence struck out. Take Notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned the suit will be heared and determined in your absence.

R. NEPOLEAN, B.A., B.L.,
M/S.No.1199/2003
K. SURESH, B.C.A., L.L.B.,
M/S.No.5118/2019
Cell: 94430 97599, 82485 98577
Advocates, Katpadi.

IN THE COURT OF 74th ADDL. CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYOHALL AT BANGALORE (CCH75)
O.S. No. 25352/2022
BETWEEN:
M/s. ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore 560001
Represented by its Manager and power of Attorney Holder Mr. Pramodh G. ...Plaintiff
AND
Mr. PUTTA SWAMY N S
...DEFENDANT
Summons

Mr. PUTTA SWAMY N S
S/o Shivanna Aged about 45 age, No. 481 WOC Road, 3rd Main Floor, Manjunata Balaji Nagar, Bangalore-560010.

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 6,00,972.47/- (Rupees Six Lakhs Nine Hundred and Seven Two and Paise Four Seven Only),** apart from future interest of **9.60% p.a.,** in **O.S.No. 25352/2022** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 75,** Before Addl., City Civil Court, Mayohall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the 5th Day of January 2023 at 11 A.M. to answer to the same, if failed The suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the 13th day of December, 2022

Order of the court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayohall,
BENGALURU-560 001

FX & CO.,
ADVOCATES,
New NO.9, OLD NO.11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005.

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CACHE

GETTY IMAGES

Deepfake technology: how and why China is planning to regulate it

What is deep synthesis technology and how is it being used to spread disinformation? What are the new guidelines being rolled out by the Cyberspace Administration of China? How is Canada in a unique position to lead the initiatives to counter deepfakes?

Abhishek Chatterjee

The story so far:

The Cyberspace Administration of China, the country's cyberspace watchdog, is rolling out new regulations, to be effective from January 10, to restrict the use of deep synthesis technology and curb disinformation. Deep synthesis is defined as the use of technologies, including deep learning and augmented reality, to generate text, images, audio and video to create virtual scenes. One of the most notorious applications of the technology is deepfakes, where synthetic media is used to swap the face or voice of one person for another. Deepfakes are getting harder to detect with the advancement of technology. It is used to generate celebrity porn videos, produce fake news, and commit financial fraud among other wrongdoings. Under the guidelines of China's new rules, companies and platforms using the technology must first receive consent from individuals before they edit their voice or image.

What is a deepfake?

Deepfakes are a compilation of artificial images and audio put together with machine-learning algorithms to spread misinformation and replace a real person's appearance, voice, or both with similar artificial likenesses or voices. It can create people who do not exist and it can fake real people saying and doing things they did not say or do.

The term deepfake originated in 2017, when an anonymous Reddit user called himself "Deepfakes." This user manipulated Google's open-source, deep-learning technology to create and post pornographic videos. The videos were doctored with a technique known as face-swapping. The user "Deepfakes" replaced real faces with celebrity faces. Deepfake technology is now being used for nefarious purposes like scams and hoaxes, celebrity pornography, election manipulation, social engineering, automated disinformation attacks, identity theft and financial fraud, cybersecurity company Norton said in a blog.

Deepfake technology has been used to impersonate former U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg and Hollywood celebrity Tom Cruise. China's new rule aims to combat the use of deepfake for spreading disinformation.

What is China's new policy to curb deepfakes?

The policy requires deep synthesis service providers and users to ensure that any doctored content using the technology is explicitly labelled and can be traced back to its source, the *South China Morning Post* reported. The regulation also mandates people using the technology to edit someone's image or voice, to notify and take the consent of the person in question. When reposting news made by the technology, the source can only be from the government-approved list of news outlets. Deep synthesis service providers must also abide by local laws, respect ethics, and maintain the "correct political direction and correct public opinion orientation", according to the new regulation.

Why has such a policy been implemented?

China's cyberspace watchdog said it was concerned that unchecked development and use of deep synthesis could lead to its use in criminal activities like online scams or defamation, according to a report by the *South China Morning Post*. The country's recent move aims to curb risks that might arise from activities provided by platforms which use deep learning or virtual reality to alter any online content. If successful, China's new policies could set an example and lay down a policy framework that other nations can follow.

What are other countries doing to combat deepfakes?

The European Union has an updated Code of Practice to stop the spread of disinformation through deepfakes. The revised Code requires tech companies including Google, Meta, and Twitter to take measures in countering deepfakes and fake accounts on their platforms. They have six months to implement their measures once they have signed up to the Code. If found non-compliant, these companies can face fines as much as 6% of their annual global turnover, according to the updated Code. Introduced in 2018, the Code of Practice on Disinformation brought together for the first time worldwide industry players to commit to counter disinformation.

The Code of Practice was signed in October 2018 by online platforms Facebook, Google, Twitter and Mozilla, as well as by advertisers and other players in the advertising industry. Microsoft joined in May 2019, while TikTok signed the Code in June 2020. However, the assessment of the Code revealed important gaps and hence the Commission has issued a Guidance on updating and strengthening the Code in order to bridge the gaps. The Code's revision process was completed in June 2022.

In July, last year, the U.S. introduced the bipartisan Deepfake Task Force Act to assist the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to counter deepfake technology. The measure directs the DHS to conduct an annual study of deepfakes – assess the technology used, track its uses by foreign and domestic entities, and come up with available countermeasures to tackle the same.

Some States in the United States such as California and Texas have passed laws that criminalise the publishing and distributing of deepfake videos that intend to influence the outcome of an election. The law in Virginia imposes criminal penalties on the distribution of nonconsensual deepfake pornography.

In India, however, there are no legal rules against using deepfake technology. However, specific laws can be addressed for misusing the tech, which include Copyright Violation, Defamation and cyber felonies.

Does this technology disrupt the right to privacy?

While Canada does not have any regulations to tackle deepfakes, it is in a unique position to lead the initiative to counter deepfakes. Within Canada, some of the most cutting-edge AI research is being conducted by the government with a number of domestic and foreign actors. Furthermore, Canada is a member and leader in many related multilateral initiatives like the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence. It can use these forums to coordinate with global and domestic actors to create deepfake policy in different areas.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

December 19 is observed as Goa Liberation Day. A quiz on the smallest State (by area) of the country

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
What was the name of the 1961 operation that led to the annexation of Goa. Which European country was the State annexed from?

QUESTION 2
According to one Hindu legend, Goa came into being when an avatar of Vishnu shot an arrow from the Sahyadri mountains into the Arabian Sea. Name the avatar.

QUESTION 3
Why is May 30, 1987, important in the history of modern Goa?

QUESTION 4
Which popular Goan dish derives its name from its original Portuguese name 'carne de vinha d'alhos' (meat with wine and garlic)?

QUESTION 5
One of the earliest references to Goa occurs in the inscriptions of King Gudea of Lagash who called it 'Goa Gubio' in 2200 BC. Of which famous ancient civilisation was Lagash a part of?

QUESTION 6
This father-son duo won Olympic medals for India albeit in different sports. They trace their ancestry to Goa. Name them.

QUESTION 7
Who is said to have set foot on Goan soil for the first time on May 6, 1542. Name the World Heritage Site in which he is entombed.

QUESTION 8
Brought to Goa by the Portuguese from Brazil, this tree's seed is an integral part of a spiritous drink indigenous to Goa. Name the tree and the drink.

Visual question:
Name this celebrated Goan artist and illustrator

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the December 16 edition of the daily quiz: 1. These Austen novels were published after her death in 1817 which included a note from this sibling of hers. **Ans: *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*; Henry**
2. This line, "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid," was said by this character about this book. **Ans: Henry Tilney and *The Mysteries of Udolpho***
3. All these Austen characters have the first name of Jane. **Ans: Four characters; Jane Bennett, Jane Fairfax, Jane Watson and Jane Fisher**
4. In *Mansfield Park*, the group decides to stage this play written by this person. **Ans: *Lovers' vows*; Elizabeth Inchbald**
5. Austen included a dedication to this royal at the beginning of her novel *Emma*. **Ans: The Royal Regent (George IV)**
6. This 2004 movie starring Aishwarya Rai is a Bollywood adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. **Answer: *Bride and Prejudice***
Visual: The name of this painting. **Ans: *The Rice Portrait***
Early Birds: Astitva Singh| Jagadish. S| K. N. Viswanathan| Bijo Paul| Anviti Holkar

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Keep looking daggers at me and you won't go to the party

I have packed both fruits and potato chips for the party as I know you like to snack on them

S. Upendran

"Wow! This pizza is really good! Is it from any of the shops I know?"
"I don't think so. A friend of mine has opened a new pizza place on RP road."
"Tell your friend that the pizza is absolutely fantastic."
"He'll be very happy to hear that! Would you like to have another slice?"
"I don't think so. I'm good."
"Didn't you say that 'I'm good' is the response you give in informal contexts when someone asks you how you are?"
"That's right! When someone asks you how you are doing, you can say, 'I'm doing good' or 'I'm good'. What you mean is you're doing fine. But you can also say, 'I'm good' when a person asks if you want any more of something."
"I see. When you say, 'I'm good', what you mean is that you've had enough. You're full."
"That's right! It's a very informal way of saying 'No, thank you'!"
"I see. I'm going to make some coffee. Would you like some?"
"I'm good."
"You know what? I know someone who loves pizza. Prabha! Maybe, I should invite her over, and the three of us can have a..."
"Please, don't do that! I don't think she likes me at all."
"Really? What makes you think that?"
"Because every time I say or do something, she looks daggers at me."
"Looks daggers at you? What are you talking about?"
"Do you know what a dagger is?"
"Of course, I do. Isn't it a small knife that people used to carry in the old days. It's usually very sharp and can be used to kill people."
"Very good. Therefore, when you look daggers at someone, you're looking very sharply or angrily at them."
"The look suggests that you'd like to kill the individual."
"Yes, that's right!"
"How about this example?
When the principal caught the students smoking in the bathroom, she looked daggers at them."
"Sounds good. If you think you're going to get me to change my mind by looking daggers at me, forget it."
"Change your mind about what?"
"That was just another example. I'll leave so you can call Prabha."
"No, no! You don't have to go."
"I think I'd better. Maybe you should pack a couple of slices of the pizza. I'll snack on them later."
"Can 'snack' be used as a verb?"
"Yes. When you 'snack on something', you usually eat something between meals. My friend snacks on fruit in the afternoon."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Saunter:
a careless leisurely gait

Synonyms: promenade, amble, perambulation, stroll

Usage:
They are sauntering by the lawns as their classes got cancelled.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/saunterpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsɔːntə/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Dalit organisations strongly divided on internal reservation

While the State government has already announced setting up of a Cabinet sub-committee to study implementation of the A.J. Sadashiva Commission recommendations, the two sections have planned protests for and against it

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Days after the State government announced setting up of a Cabinet sub-committee to study the implementation of the A.J. Sadashiva Commission recommendations on internal reservation, Dalit organisations seem to be divided over the issue. While a section wants the commission's recommendations to be implemented, another has expressed reservation about the suggestions, which are leaked information that are available in the public domain.

Urging the Cabinet sub-committee not to make any recommendation on dividing of reservation pie among the 101 SC communities without holding public consultations, some Dalit groups have announced a show of strength in a rally in Bengaluru on January 10. The Sadashiva Commission was set up in 2005 and it submitted its recommendations in 2012, and since then there have been voices for and against it.

The Dalit Sangharsha Samiti has announced 'Belagavi chalo' demanding implementation of internal reservation for the Scheduled Castes. K. MURALI KUMAR

While stating that they were not opposed to internal reservation, the Karnataka Meesalathi Samrakshana Okkoota in a submission to the Chief Secretary said that it opposed fixing of internal reservation based on the Sadashiva Commission recommendations. Instead, the Cabinet sub-committee should study the subject based on untouchability among other issues, it said.

Need for discussion

The okkoota pointed out that the commission report has neither been discussed in the legislature nor in the public domain, and the leaked contents have led to squabbles between the 101 Scheduled Castes communities that are beneficiaries of reservation policy. "About 70% of the communities have been opposed to the available information on the commission's recommendations and have been fighting against it for 10 years now," it said. The internal reservation should be fixed based on social backwardness and population, it added.

Based on the available leaked information in public domain, it has termed the commission's report as "unscientific and unconstitutional." resulting in confusion and suspicion. "The commission report on Bhovi, Banjara, Koracha, and Korama among others leads to a fear that they will be dropped from the list of SCs," they contend.

Belagavi chalo

However, the Dalit Sangharsha Samiti (DSS) has announced Belagavi chalo on Tuesday seeking implementation of the commission's report. DSS leader N. Murthy said that the commission was set up after it was found that reservation benefits had not been equally split between all 101 communities. "Though the commission's recommendations came in 2012, it has still not been implemented. Throughout, the JD(S), BJP and Congress have promised to implement the report but have not done so. Certain speculation about the leaked contents have led to heartburn and confusion among the SC communities. If the commission's recommendations are not implemented, it will have political repercussions in the 2023 Assembly and 2024 Parliament elections," he said.

Meanwhile, the government is in preparation to pilot the Bill to enhance reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the State from 15% to 17% and 3% to 7%, respectively. The Bill will replace the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and Appointment or Posts in the Services Under the State) Ordinance 2022, which was promulgated in October.

Nearly 5,000 policemen on duty in Belagavi with winter session set to begin; 62 groups plan protests

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The 10-day winter session of the State legislature is set to begin amidst tight security in Belagavi from Monday in view of the border row as well as plans by various organisations to stage protests in the city at the time of session.

According to an official communication, 4,931 police personnel have been deployed for maintaining law and order in Belagavi during the session. They include six Superintendents of Police, 11 additional SPs, 43 DySPs, 95 police Inspectors, and 241 police sub-inspectors. A total of 500 CCTV cameras have been set up and six drones will be used for the bandobast.

Apart from the Suvarna Soudha, where the session would be held, there is a strong presence of police this time even at hotels where the legislators and prominent officials are camping. Such a measure is said to have been taken in the wake of incident of stone pelting at a few government vehicles during the previous year's session by MES activists.

The winter session is set to witness political heat both inside and outside the legislature houses as 62 organisations, including the sugarcane growers, are planning to stage their protests in the city during the session, while the Opposition too is set to raise various contentious issues inside the legislature houses, including the border row and alleged theft of voters' data.

The proposed winter session has assumed political importance as it is not only the last legislature session of the present dispensation in Belagavi, but also the one which is being held in the shadow of the forthcoming Assembly elections expected to be scheduled within three to four months.

In this context, there are expectations of the government using the occasion to announce a slew of development measures for the northern region though there is no official word in this regard. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said on Sunday that the SC/ST Reservation Ordinance Replacement Bill is among a set of Bills to be introduced in the winter session.

Women sprucing up the garden in front of the Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi on Sunday, and (below) officers checking the security systems in the area. P.K. BADIGER

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Investment and communalism

KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar's *(in picture)* attempt at linking communal disturbances and the recent cooker blast case in Dakshina Kannada district to poor investment proposals in the coastal region seems to have missed the mark.

According to Mr. Shivakumar, the region had drawn a blank in investments largely owing to the ruling BJP's alleged communal politics.

The coastal belt, however, received nearly ₹2 lakh crore out of ₹10 lakh crore investment proposals received by Karnataka during the recently held Global Investors' Meet. Most of the investment proposals are in the renewable energy sector, according to the Industries Department. Despite limited carrying capacity of the coastal belt, the region has received many green project proposals, thanks to air, sea, and road connectivity. The KPCC chief, already under fire by the saffron party for stating that BJP is trying to make political capital out of the Mangaluru cooker blast case, seems to have given more ammunition to the ruling BJP with his statement on investments.

Repeat telecast

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah *(in picture)* seems very keen to impress the newly-elected All India Congress Committee (AICC) president M. Mallikarjun Kharge which was evident at a recent event in Kalaburagi. At a massive meeting organised to felicitate him upon his first visit to his hometown after assuming office, Mr. Kharge had to briefly leave the stage for attending an important phone call. It was just a few minutes before Mr. Siddaramaiah was called to deliver his speech. As Mr. Siddaramaiah approached the podium, he paused and enquired with the people around whether Mr. Kharge would return to the stage soon and then began his speech. In his speech, Mr. Siddaramaiah vociferously argued that Congress would return to its past glory under Mr. Kharge's leadership. He spoke effusively about Mr. Kharge's leadership qualities and vision. However, Mr. Kharge was not on the stage through all this. When he finally returned and occupied his seat, Mr. Siddaramaiah reproduced the entire speech where he had showered praises on the AICC chief.

Nagesh Prabhu
Kumar Buradikatti

Council Chairman election: Horatti likely to be official candidate

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/BELAGAVI

As the election to the post of Chairman of the Legislative Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday in the winter session starting on Monday at Belagavi with pro tem Chairman Raghunath Rao Malkhapure and former Chairman Basavaraj Horatti in the race, sources close to the latter have claimed that the BJP has confirmed his candidature.

Former Chairman and a record eight-time legislator Basavaraj Horatti had joined BJP in June after being promised the post by the saffron party. However, despite the election being scheduled in monsoon session in September, the election did not take place as a section in the BJP had opposed Mr. Horatti's candidature, citing him to be a newcomer to the party.

Sources close to Mr. Horatti claimed that the veteran Lingayat leader has been intimated that he would be the BJP official candidate in the election. "Mr. Horatti has been informed on Saturday that he will be the party candidate. He will file his nomination on Monday," a source close to the leader said.

Sources also said that there are also informal efforts to convince the principal Opposition Congress not to field any candidate and enable the election to the chairman post to be held unanimously. "Upper House is house of elders. Politics can be avoided as Mr. Horatti is the senior-most member in the house. Feelers have been sent informally," sources said.

Basavaraj Horatti

In the 75-member Upper House, the BJP for the first time attained majority this year and has 39 members besides Mr. Malkhapure. Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) have 26 and 8 members, respectively, while there is one Independent.

Meanwhile, Mr. Malkhapure announced the details of the election at a press conference in Belagavi on Sunday. He, however, desisted from giving a direct reply when asked if he would contest the polls. "Sitting in the Chairman's position, it is not proper for me to say whether I myself will be contesting the polls. You will know," said Mr. Malkapure.

Honorarium of GP members doubled

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Meeting a long-pending demand of elected representatives at the gram panchayat level, the State government on Sunday doubled the monthly honorarium for the elected representatives in gram panchayats.

While the honorarium of the gram panchayat president has been raised from ₹3,000 to ₹6,000 , the honorarium of vice-president of gram panchayat has been raised from ₹2,000 to ₹4,000. The honorarium for gram panchayat member has been raised from ₹1,000 to ₹2,000. In March this year, members of the Legislative Council, cutting across party lines, urged the State government to increase the honorarium at the basic level of democracy.

Govt. staff on indefinite strike

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

State government employees under the National Pension Scheme (NPS) will stage an indefinite protest for scrapping NPS at Freedom Park from Monday. Shantharam, president, Karnataka Government NPS Employees' Association, said, "Scrapping of NPS is a life and death question for us. More than 50,000 people will be participating in the protest on Monday."

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Winners of entrepreneurship competition declared

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Bio Entrepreneurship Competition 2022 (NBEC 2022) has declared 19 start-ups and innovators and five student teams as winners.

The winners were declared after scrutinising 3,000 applications from 35 States and UTs, including metros, Tier I, II, and III cities.

NBEC is a nationwide annual showcase of India's most promising business ideas with significant commercial, innovation and impact potentials in the life sciences and biotech domain.

The winners this year addressed challenges in antimicrobial resistance, digital health, therapeutics, medical devices, animal health, agriculture, water and sanitation, food and nutraceuticals, industrial biotechnology, maternal and child nutrition, green chemistry and clean technology.

Winning startups stand to receive a cumulative of ₹16 crore in cash prizes and investment opportunities while student-led teams get ₹9 lakh in cash prizes.

The competition will provide access to industry mentorship in tie-ups with key industry leaders to selected winners.

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3	DM - MEDICAL ONCOLOGY	₹ 15 Lac	1.2 Lac/Month
4	DM - NEPHROLOGY	₹ 5 Lac	1.2 Lac/Month
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6	DM - NEONATOLOGY	₹ 5 Lac	1.2 Lac/Month
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8	MCH - UROLOGY	₹ 20 Lac	1.2 Lac/Month
9	MCH - SURGICAL ONCOLOGY	₹ 15 Lac	1.2 Lac/Month
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• Choice Filling: 19th Dec upto 11:55 pm of 24th Dec 2022
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‘Railway land for Bengaluru suburban rail project will be made available in a few days’

Union Minister says there is a need to build the suburban rail project on the lines of Mumbai suburban rail which carries over 85 lakh passengers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Railway land required for the Bengaluru suburban rail project would be soon handed over to KRIDE – Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited – the agency implementing the 148 km network, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said here on Sunday.

Union Minister of Railways and Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw during an interaction with the media in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Replying to a question on the delay in transferring railway land for the project during an interaction organised by the BJP, the Minister said, “I reviewed the Bengaluru suburban rail project three times in the last one year. There are significant modifications in designs brought in to make the project successful. The land allocation for the first leg of the project is already in process. Within a few days, land allocations will happen. We have already asked KRIDE to go ahead with the project.”

“The cost of the metro is huge which is about ₹250 crore to ₹300 crore per km. We have taken the challenge of building a network which is less than ₹100 crore per km. I am very excited to share that our engineers have come up with innovative designs. We are confident of delivering a world-class suburban rail system in Bengaluru.”

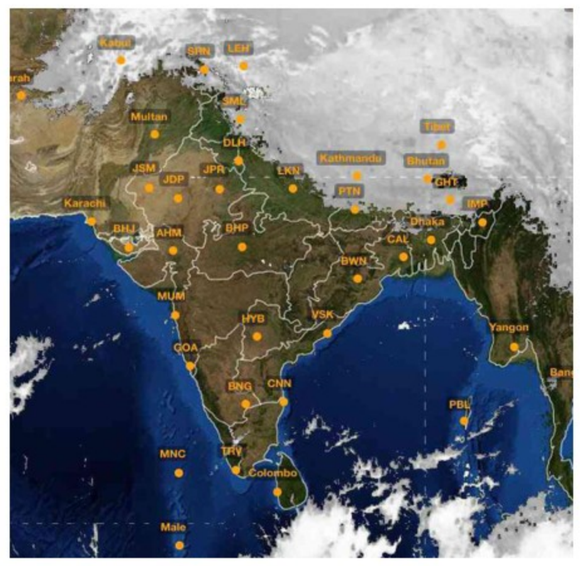
When asked about the Centre’s stand on online ‘game of chance’ which is facing vehement opposition from various State governments cutting across party lines, the Minister said, “We had IT Ministers representing States across the country, every States shown serious concern about the fact that online gaming is having on the society, especially addictive part which is going against the social norms. We created a very serious consultation process, we should be able to come up with a proper policy very soon for regulation of these online games,” the Minister said.

Designing Vande Metro

The Minister said the Centre has taken measures to build ‘world class’ Vande Metro which will be a big lead forward in terms of superior designs than the current generation of trains. The new trains will be manufactured in large numbers and trains that were designed in the 1960s and 1970s will be replaced. He said the Railways will roll out the first indigenously manufactured hydrogen-powered train by the end of 2023.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Cold wave conditions in isolated pockets likely over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and north Rajasthan. Dense fog in isolated pockets likely over Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.6	14.2	Kozhikode	—	33.2	23.0
Ahmedabad	—	34.0	19.5	Kurnool	—	31.5	21.9
Aizawl	—	—	10.9	Lucknow	—	23.4	10.0
Allahabad	—	26.0	8.8	Madurai	—	31.8	22.4
Bengaluru	—	26.5	18.4	Mangaluru	—	33.0	22.4
Bhopal	—	27.3	11.6	Mumbai	—	35.2	23.6
Bhubaneswar	—	28.2	13.4	Mysuru	—	30.1	18.4
Chandigarh	—	23.0	7.4	New Delhi	—	23.2	5.3
Chennai	—	29.2	25.1	Patna	—	—	10.5
Coimbatore	—	29.5	21.0	Port Blair	—	30.3	25.2
Dehradun	—	24.4	7.2	Puducherry	—	31.2	22.2
Gangtok	—	17.3	9.6	Pune	—	31.2	19.3
Goa	—	34.0	22.1	Raipur	—	29.4	9.6
Guwahati	—	27.9	12.7	Ranchi	—	24.0	9.6
Hubballi	—	30.0	18.0	Shillong	—	18.9	7.6
Hyderabad	—	30.7	18.1	Shimla	—	18.2	8.3
Imphal	—	23.9	6.5	Srinagar	—	13.3	-3.2
Jaipur	—	26.3	10.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.9	23.6
Kochi	—	31.6	23.2	Tiruchi	—	30.1	23.0
Kohima	—	19.0	6.6	Vijayawada	—	29.8	23.4
Kolkata	—	25.7	14.7	Visakhapatnam	—	28.6	22.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.23	144	37	 49	99	
Bengaluru	...8	..40	23	... 246	.....—	
Chennai	.25	..50	41	... 232	...139	
Delhi	.28	106	68	... 422	...414	
Hyderabad	...4	..—	39	... 163	.....—	
Kolkata	.26	..23	33	... 347	...262	
Lucknow	.11	..72	82	... 347	...270	
Mumbai	.29	245	.—	... 162	.....—	
Pune	..—	..77	89	..... —	.....—	
Visakhapatnam	.33	..31	30	... 159	...136	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Begusarai, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 106 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Minor accidentally kills his 7-year-old brother

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The parents, hearing the gunshot, rushed to the spot and found the boy lying dead

In a tragic incident, a seven-year-old boy was allegedly shot dead by his elder brother while he pulled the trigger of a country-made gun accidentally while playing with it at a farmhouse in Kadashivanahalli village in Kanakapura on Saturday.

The deceased was playing with his 16-year-old brother at the farmhouse belonging to Mallesh, where their parents worked as labourers.

According to the police, Mallesh has a country-made gun to fire at wild animals, and had kept the gun loaded as his farm is adjacent to the forest area. The elder boy, while playing, picked it up, and unsuspectingly aimed at his younger brother and pulled the trigger from a close range.

The boy sustained serious injuries and died on the spot with excessive bleeding.

The parents hearing the gunshot, rushed to the spot along with others, and found the boy lying dead in a pool of blood while the elder boy was crying inconsolably.

The police arrested Mallesh charging him under various sections of the Arms Act and culpable homicide.

Aspirants find paper lengthy

CLAT-2023

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) 2023, the gateway to admission to 22 National Law Universities in India, was held on Sunday.

The Consortium of National Law Universities conducted the exam for admission to the five-year integrated undergraduate and postgraduate law programmes at 127 centres, including Bengaluru, in 23 States and 2 UTs.

Candidates arrive to write the CLAT at a centre in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

This year‘s aspirants found the question paper to be comparatively lengthy, and most of them struggled with time management during the exam. “The section for quantitative ability was difficult,” said Saujanya Bhikshu. “I referred to the last ten years’ question papers and at general knowledge books,” she added.

Nithushree Babu, an aspirant from Mangaluru, found the general knowledge portion more difficult than the rest.

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Don’t repair, prepare

Skills and competency should go hand-in-hand for success in the corporate world, opines well-known leadership trainer and motivational speaker Shiv Khera

Madumitha Srinivasan
madhumitha.s@thehindu.co.in

What prompted educator, business consultant, and motivational speaker Shiv Khera to design a new training programme targeted at school and college students was a simple flaw in the education system. Educational institutions, says Khera, teach students how to make a living, they don’t teach them how to live. If students are not taught essential life skills at the school and college level, their skills need to “repaired” at the organisation level.

Khera believes that one needs more than qualifications to be a professional and never has any generation been so unprepared to face the world as the current one. One of the reasons is technology, which has made the youth comfortable with machines, but uncomfortable with people. The other is, they have not been taught to deal with failure.

According to Khera, competence is the willingness and desire to do the job, which complements the skill. His new training programme will teach students to put their skills to use competently. In this interview, Khera shares his take on leadership styles and why soft skills are essential to succeed today. Excerpts:

What are the changes you have observed in leadership styles over the three decades of your experience?

Over 35 years, corporate leadership has been shifting from authoritarian to participative. This has its advantages and its own purpose: to build support and create synergies, thereby creating a powerful team that goes the extra mile; to make the most of collective wisdom by getting people to participate and come up with new ideas, enabling better decision making; and to create more leaders by empowering them. Empowerment is a consequence of good structured training and conditioning.

Training for leadership should start early. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

What should students be prepared for when they first step into the workplace?

Students should go in with a mindset that ‘I shall always give more than what I get’, rather than do as little as they can get away with. The new workforce, unfortunately, has false expectations. They all want to be an overnight success and to start as CEOs, not realising that the real world is quite different. The biggest challenge that organisations are facing is finding people with trust and accountability. A global study conducted by Gallup found that 63% of people who go to work are disengaged and an additional 24% are actively disengaged. That leaves only 13% of people who actually do work.

What do you foresee as the future of workplace attitudes and leadership?

Organisations that are looking to succeed must invest in their people, to train them on attitude, leadership, motivation, and values.

Why is failure important?

It teaches us what to do and what not to do going forward. It keeps people grounded and also teaches us that, as human beings, we all are vulnerable. It teaches humility. Learning from past mistakes is important. Making a mistake or failing, once in a while, is not the end of the world. Winners learn from failure, instead of repeating the same mistakes. Sadly, as parents and teachers, we have taught our children only two words: success and win. We don’t teach them how to fail and how to lose. Life does not always go one way: up and up. It is like a roller-coaster ride. It goes up and down. When people fail, they don’t know how to handle it.

What is one striking behavioural trend that you see in today’s generation?

The positive change in the current generation is that they are in a hurry. They don’t want to waste or lose time. They want to get to their destination fast. That’s a positive side. But the negative is that to reach the destination quickly, they take shortcuts and compromise on values. Often they go in for short-term gains resulting in long-term pain.

What skills will you focus on in the new leadership programme?

The new leadership programme we have created for schools and colleges is called: “Prepare Them, Don’t Repair Them”. For people to be successful in life, they must master three skills: People skills; Persuasion skills; Prioritising skills.

What is the one life skill you would pick over others?

I would not pick one, but two: building a positive attitude and staying firm on values.

SCHOLARSHIPS

HDFC Badhte Kadam Scholarship
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Eligibility: Indian students from Class 11 to undergraduate (general and professional). Students with Disabilities studying in Class 11-12, pursuing undergraduate courses, diploma/ITI, and vocational courses. Candidates preparing for competitive examinations such as NEET, JEE, CLAT, and NIFT at a recognised coaching institution. Applicants must have obtained at least 60% marks (80% for coaching students) in the previous class or board exams (Note: No minimum marks required for Students with Disabilities). Annual family income should be below ₹6 lakhs (below ₹8 lakhs for Students with Disabilities) from all sources. Special consideration will be given to girls and students going through a crisis (loss of a parent/s, terminal illness in family).
Rewards: Up to ₹1 lakh
Deadline: December 31
Application: Online b4s.in/plus/HTPF12

Keep India Smiling Foundational Scholarship and Mentorship Programme
Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd. is giving young students an opportunity to pursue their academic/career aspirations.
Eligibility: For individuals helping others, applicants must be graduates and involved in activities like teaching a group of underprivileged children or providing sports training to them. For sportspersons, applicants must be between nine and 20 years and have represented the state/ country at the state/ national/ international level in the last 2/3 years and must be ranked within 500 nationally or within 100 at the state level. Annual family income must be less than ₹5 lakhs per annum.
Rewards: ₹75,000 per year for up to three years
Deadline: December 31
Application: Online b4s.in/plus/KSSI2

Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship
Amazon invites applications from first-year girl students from underserved and economically constrained backgrounds.
Eligibility: Indian girl students pursuing B.E./BTech in Computer Science or allied branches are eligible. They must be currently studying in the first year of undergraduate programme. Annual family income is less than ₹3 lakhs. Admission must be taken through a state or national-level entrance exam.
Rewards: ₹40,000 per year until graduation. The Amazon Future Engineer Scholars will also receive mentorship for tech careers, skill-building as well as networking opportunities, and a chance to appear for Amazon internship.
Deadline: December 31
Application: Online b4s.in/plus/AFES3

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

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A BG-BGE

Questionable refusal

In Bilkis case, SC should have reviewed order on Gujarat deciding on remission

It is a matter of concern that the Supreme Court has declined to review its May 2022 order holding that the Gujarat government is the "appropriate government" to decide on the premature release of 11 convicts serving life terms in the Bilkis Bano gang-rape case, which also involved the gruesome murder of several others. A court's jurisdiction to review its own order is limited to correcting any error apparent on the face of the record. It is also a discretionary remedy and generally not heard in open court. However, it appears that the two-Judge Bench has failed to address a significant error in its finding that the decision on remission should be made by the Gujarat government. The case, which arose from one of the many heinous crimes that took place during the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, had been transferred for trial to Mumbai by the Court. The appeal arising from it was heard by the Bombay High Court. Section 432(7) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) says the "appropriate government" is "the Government of the State within which the offender is sentenced". Despite this clear provision, the Bench had taken the view that as the offence had taken place in Gujarat, and the trial in Mumbai, further matters had returned to the jurisdiction of Gujarat on conclusion of trial. It had also noted that the transfer of the trial to another State had taken place under "extraordinary circumstances".

The Bench's view was quite peculiar because it goes against a statutory provision. Also, the transfer took place only because a fair trial was not possible in Gujarat. It stands to reason that the Gujarat government ought to have been divested of the power to consider remission in the same case. Another aspect of the earlier order was that it had specified that the remission should be considered under its 1992 policy, as it was the one in force on the day of their conviction. Accordingly, in the absence of any specific curbs in that policy on the power to remit the sentences of those involved in heinous crimes, the convicts were released. The Centre, it was later revealed, had also concurred with the decision. Fortunately, the refusal to review the earlier order will not affect the outcome of a separate petition challenging their release. There seem to be enough grounds to question the remission. Court filings suggest that the trial judge's opinion against their release was disregarded. Further, the presence of political functionaries, including BJP MLAs, on a committee that recommended their release, may have also vitiated the decision. The Supreme Court may still have an opportunity to examine the legitimacy of allowing the premature release of those directly involved in communally motivated crimes.

A wasted chance

GST Council members must do more to make indirect tax regime more effective

Convened after a gap of six months, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on Saturday cleared what officials called a 'pathbreaking' move to decriminalise certain offences by taxpayers, with a higher ₹2 crore threshold for initiating prosecutions, except in cases involving fake invoices. Aimed at reducing disputes and chances of tax payer harassment when the stakes are not too high, these changes will take time to materialise. The Centre intends to introduce these changes in the Finance Bill of 2023-24 to be presented on February 1, 2023, and State legislatures will have to amend their respective GST laws too. While industry believes the prosecution threshold could have been raised further, there is greater disappointment that the GST Council side-stepped the broader solution to deal with rising GST disputes – the long-pending move to set up appellate tribunals as envisaged at the launch of the new indirect regime five and a half years ago. To be sure, a report with recommendations on the functioning of these tribunals submitted by a group of ministers of the Council was part of this meeting's agenda, but for now, such disputes will continue to clog High Courts.

The Council took up a handful of other items – a 5% levy on husk of pulses used as a cattle feed input was scrapped, while the tax rate on items such as Fryums and Sports Utility Vehicles was 'clarified'. These minutiae apart, the larger takeaway is the outcomes not pursued – including the tribunal proposal, virtually half the agenda was abandoned and discussions were curtailed to a little under three hours. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said this was done as some States' representatives had other 'committed business' to attend to. This is most surprising as the December 17 date was notified well in advance. It is not clear if some States, otherwise vocal about their pending GST dues and reforms to improve their revenue share, sought any rescheduling, if the said Saturday did not suit them. Ostensibly, some State Finance Ministers are busy formulating their Budgets for the coming year, but the Union Budget preparations did not hold back Ms. Sitharaman from making time for this critical dialogue. This almost casual approach of some States towards the apex GST governance mechanism, not only means delays in efforts to plug tax leakages in the tobacco and Gutkha business, or fix the tax for the booming online gaming business but also bodes ill for the effectiveness of the Council. Taxpayers deserve more than such *ad hoc*, half-hearted, half-day deliberations with insipid outcomes.

India's crushing court backlogs, out-of-the box reform

Sriram Panchu

is a senior advocate and mediator

Two important voices have weighed in recently on delays in the justice delivery system. The Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud stated that increasing the number of judges will not demolish the perennial problem of pendency, and that it is difficult enough now to find good High Court judge material. Sushil Kumar Modi, Chairman of Parliament's Standing Committee on Law and Justice has called for out-of-the-box thinking to solve the problem. Joining the dots, it seems clear that reforms inspired by convention will be pretty much like rearranging the deck chairs on the sinking Titanic. So, do we have other instruments, resources and methods? Here are three which are doable, do not cost much, and yield solutions.

Losing resources from High Court, top court

We have difficulty in finding good talent to be appointed as judges of the High Court, but year after year we see the spectacle of large numbers of experienced and fine judges retiring from the High Courts because they have reached the age of 62. Many have several good years of work left in them which goes waste, much like the richest sediment on river banks getting washed out to sea. All that needs to be done is to continue them with pay and perquisites, and we would have kept the best for their last run of service.

Extend the out-of-box thinking and bring back retired Supreme Court judges to hear admission of Special Leave Petitions. These are appeals filed in hundreds every week against all kinds of orders of lower courts and tribunals across the length and the breadth of the country. They are the biggest clog to justice in the Supreme Court (SC) because they take away half the time of the country's senior most judges in just reading these mountainous files to decide which minute fraction to hear and dismiss the rest. It is stretching an analogy, but imagine the board of governors of the central bank sitting to examine doubtful currency notes. Many SC judges are in fine fettle at 65 when they retire, and this is better work for them than arbitrations where they become subject to scrutiny by District Judges. And working hours and schedules can be flexibly designed for retired judges to operate. This will enable the current judges to take up important cases in adequate Bench strength and composition. Extend this a little more and have a scheme by which experienced High Court senior advocates sit as judges once a week to hear matters from another State High Court. Many would sign up for the novel and contributing experience, and many would do an excellent job.

There are instruments, resources and methods that work to address the issue of daunting delays in the justice delivery system

Strengthen online justice and mediation

But, the question arises, do we then not need more brick and mortar structures, office infrastructure and an army of staff? No, we do not, and that leads us to the second suggestion. Cultivate online justice. The courts responded splendidly to the COVID-19 shutdown by harnessing online facilities, and, pretty soon, judges and lawyers were quite well-versed in this new medium and welcomed its ease and flexibility. The environment too must have been relieved to be saved of carbon footprint. Unfortunately, we have gone back to the old days of only physical hearings in crowded courtrooms, jettisoning even the benefits of hybrid methods. However, enabling these *ad hoc* judges to work online from home with minimum support staff is an excellent harness of human and technology resources; it will enable a vast number of cases to be disposed of. And disposed of well, not just disposed off which is what will happen if we appoint inept new judges. The last not only produces injustice galore but needs two good ones to sit in corrective appeal.

Lastly, employ mediation. As a method of dispute resolution, it is far superior to litigation in cases where it can be applied. Those cover a wide range, from personal and matrimonial to civil and commercial and property disputes. India has had a marvellous introductory run with this process; in less than 20 years it has firmly established itself in the court annexed mediation schemes with thousands of trained and enthusiastic lawyers and other mediators handling lakhs of cases. If well planned and executed, mark my words, we have the capacity to lift half the load of such cases off court dockets and onto mediation tables. And, even now, most mediation centres have a success rate of over 50%, several much more. When you realise that it costs much less, takes a fraction of the time litigation does, brings about settlements which all sides can agree to, eliminates appeals, is easy to enforce if necessary, and respects and restores relationships then you know why Singapore's Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon says, "What's not to like about mediation?" It is a no-brainer to use mediation as a central peg of reform. What is necessary, however, is to devise and implement sensible policies and strategies to encourage resort to it; and principal amongst these is to make it a professionally attractive career option for mediators who are willing to make a living by being peacemakers. An Indian Mediation Service can be created on the lines of the judicial service. And both incentives and disincentives must be devised for existing and prospective litigants to try this consensual method in good faith. That is all that is necessary; guide the horse to the pond, and more often than not, he will drink from it and savour the nectar of settlement and amity.

Reform can succeed

When we look at the crushing backlogs of Indian courts even the bravest feel daunted, and every Chief Justice probably feels like the Greek mythological figure of Sisyphus vainly, and in eternity, rolling the boulder up the hill only for it to roll back. Conventional reform prescribes more of the same – more judges, more courts, more staff, more infrastructure. But we know that we do not have the resources of either money or men and women. And, surely, we are tired of constant bewailing of the obvious and ever present problems. These suggestions offer a strikingly different approach, one which garners and puts to best use excellent available resources, technological and personal, and can make a telling impact. And they will show that innovation and reform can succeed, a message that is much needed. When necessity and possibility converge, sparks get ignited. To recall Sri Aurobindo in his great writing *The Hour of God*, the moment has arrived; but will we lose it because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call?

Good governance beyond motherhood and apple pie

Srivatsa Krishna

is an IAS officer

"So, they [the government] go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful for impotency," said Sir Winston Churchill on governance.

Churchill's definition of (bad) governance is applicable even 100 years after he spoke so sagaciously. One of the big achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is that while administrative reforms are, usually, all about motherhood and apple pie proclamations such as "wash your hand before you eat", he has turned at least some of it into action. Usually, good governance has meant cliches and platitudes such as "corruption is bad for good governance", "we should cut red-tape in the country", and "we should use more e-governance in India", but that is now a thing of the past.

First, the Modi government (thanks to the stellar work of economist Bibek Debroy) has repealed an estimated 2,000 Acts, statuettes and subordinate legislation which include dozens of Appropriation acts, the Excise Act 1863, Foreign Recruiting Act 1874, Elephants Preservation Act 1879, and Bengal Districts Act, 1836 to name just a few. There is a long way to go, especially for State governments, where such obsolete laws are often tools for rent seeking.

Karnataka is one of India's fastest growing States, with a GSDP of ₹20.50 lakh crore, 38.34 lakh enterprises, 9.2 lakh provident fund payers, and 70.84 lakh workers. It has 1.1 crore students in schools and 21.8 lakh students pursuing higher education. The State is also the highest exporter of IT services. However, Karnataka ranked 17th in the 2019 Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) national rankings, and this presents a significant opportunity for driving institutional reforms with respect to compliance. Avantis RegTech has studied industries and compliance across Indian States and concludes that Karnataka features in the top five States in India in terms of compliance burden. This report highlights 26,134 criminal clauses across India and almost 40% of compliances can send an entrepreneur to jail. Karnataka's employers confront a total of 1,175 State-specific jail clauses and ranks among the top five in the country. A micro, small and medium enterprise operating in Karnataka currently deals with an average of 778 compliances annually across labour, finance, and taxation, secretarial, environment, health and safety, industry-specific and commercial categories. Imagine the scope for similar good governance across sectors and across 30 States.

The cliches and platitudes are now a thing of the past, with the country having made a lot of progress, but more needs to be done in what is an endless quest

Second, for 30 years from 1998, any pecuniary benefit to any private parties, without public interest, regardless of whether there was an intent to cause such gains or not, was construed as criminal misconduct by a public servant. Therefore, even honest officers had to face this cruel law. Thus, if one were to buy laptops from vendor x for a department, and vendor z offered it a few thousands cheaper, one could be hauled up, even without *mens rea*. This government finally scrapped this provision of the Prevention of Corruption Act, thereby enabling good governance, by allowing officers to act without fear.

Enterprise DigiLocker, compliance portal

Third, another possible small step towards good governance is the DigiLocker (an integral part of the India stack) now has more than five billion documents and 100 million users. Likewise, the Union and State governments can set up enterprise DigiLockers to store all documents that any small or large business is expected to possess (Pan card, GSTN number, Aadhaar card, bank account details, etc.). Multiple departments which seek the same information over and again (often charging a price for it) can just download these at the click of a button. It is simple to set up and will enable another kind of good governance. Karnataka has implemented KUTUMBA (family beneficiary database), FRUITS (Farmer Registration and Unified beneficiary Information System), SVAMITVA (drone-based property and land mapping, or Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) and GraamaOne (single point assistance centre for citizen centric activities at panchayat level), all leading to more good governance.

Fourth, today no State government or the Government of India has any common portal, through which businesses even get to know fully the extent of the compliance burden which is spread across multiple departments and agencies. The simplest thing to do would be to create a common portal where all the compliances for a particular industry are listed as well as an update of periodic changes to government orders or any court judgment. This will ensure that an entrepreneur or a businessman does not have to search for information across 40 to 50 different websites. The Reserve Bank of India has the concept of a "master circular" which should be adopted by governments too.

Fifth, the use of technology is critical in engendering good governance. Some examples abound in Government already, and many more are possible. There are startups such as Avantari and Rephrase.ai which use artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) to create "mass personalization" in advertising and communication. Imagine the Prime Minister or a Chief Minister addressing every citizen of his constituency by name and having a personalised message about the various welfare schemes. Or a Chief Minister inviting the Top Fortune 500 CEOs by name and with a specific incentive about their industry, to invest in his State. All this is happening with AI-augmented videos.

The issue of who pays

Lastly, everyone aspires for a better standard of living and life – this is as universal as the sun rising in the East. I can bet there is no one in India who does not want the quality of health care that is there in Scandinavia or the United States. However, India's tax to GDP ratio hovers around 11%-12% as against 45% in the U.S. One is not aware of a single Budget meeting where any industry association or leader would say tax us more in national interest and use the funds to improve primary health care in the country. Everyone says, leave me alone, but tax my neighbour. So, where should the Indian government find resources for providing U.S.-like health care with India-like taxes? Good governance is also the responsibility of enlightened citizens who should give some thought to complex trade-offs like these and not just only demand good governance but also contribute to it.

In sum, India has made a lot of progress on good governance beyond motherhood, but it is an endless journey; not a one-off destination to be reached. As India enters its good governance week (December 19-25, 2022), we can be satisfied that we will soon prove Churchill wrong.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bilkis Bano's plea

In the top court's rejection of Bilkis Bano's plea to review its May judgment, the gap between the law and real justice is too evident to miss in (Page 1, December 18, "SC rejects Bilkis Bano's plea to review its May verdict").

Without being judgmental about the wisdom of the verdict, one can, it is felt, reserve the right to be heavily disappointed and helpless, unable to soothe even a bit of mental trauma that Ms. Bano undergoes day in and day out. And, being part of a failed society is an excruciating denouement for one and all.

Ayyasseri Raveendranath,
Aranmula, Kerala

The verdict is quite in contrast to what the Chief Justice of India said a few days ago: that the Supreme Court exists "to protect personal liberty and rights" of every citizen. It is a travesty of justice that the 11 convicts serving life sentence for committing a gruesome crime were released prematurely citing some codes regarding the remission of convicts. Even worse was that the convicts were also felicitated, by women folk too. The ball is still with the highest court.

A.Jainulabdeen,
Chennai

Elephants in distress

The plight of many temple elephants is distressing (Tamil Nadu, "Sacred and shackled: Tamil Nadu's temple elephants", December 18). An elephant is also required to walk at least 25 km a day. Keeping it shackled is cruelty at its extreme. Though I am not an atheist, I do wonder how god, who is unable to give freedom and happiness to an elephant in his own temple, is going to bless his devotees.

A.R. Ramanarayanan,
Chennai

Ceasefire needed

Instead of dousing the flames of war in Ukraine, America is adding fuel to the fire by sending Patriot missile batteries to Ukraine. The damage the war has done to the world economy is immense. It is time top world leaders strongly work towards a ceasefire.

Kangayam R. Narasimhan,
Chennai

Corrections & Clarifications

In a story titled "Curbing air pollution in India needs efforts across South Asia: WB report" (December 16, 2022) the $PM_{2.5}$ figures were erroneously given in g/cubic metre. They should have been in microgram/cubic metre.

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Iran at a political crossroads

Talmiz Ahmad
is a former diplomat

Iran has been rocked by agitations since the killing of Mahsa Amini, 22, who was in detention of the morality police enforcing strict hijab norms, in September. These demonstrations have been led by women chanting "Woman, Life, Freedom" and mocking their clerical leaders by publicly burning their hijab and cutting off their hair. They now include participants from all classes and ethnic backgrounds, including workers, business people, sportspersons and celebrities.

Security forces have responded harshly: by early December, nearly 500 persons had been killed. About 20,000 people have been detained, several have been given death sentences, and two people have already been executed. On December 14, the United Nations Economic and Social Council voted to expel Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Persistent popular agitations

The Iran government has defended itself by describing the agitators as terrorists who are using weapons provided by foreign sources. Arms caches have been discovered in the Sistan-Baluchestan province and "terrorist" groups have been apprehended with firearms in other provinces. Some demonstrators have burned official vehicles and attacked security personnel in response to police brutality.

Iran has a long history of public protests. In 2009, there were agitations against the manipulation of results in the presidential elections. In 2017-18, a parlous economic situation brought about 50,000 people on to the streets while in 2019, over 2,00,000 demonstrators had agitated in over a hundred cities.

The ongoing agitations are significant because they are led by women protesting about the disabilities inflicted upon them as part of the Islamic regime's moral code. But now there is anger not just about the hijab, but about the economic situation and the abridgement of personal rights. Placards carry the slogan, "Death to Khamenei", Iran's supreme leader and the principal guardian of the Islamic revolution.

The root cause remains the economic situation. As a result of crippling sanctions, millions of middle-class Iranians have dropped down the economic scale. Around 36% were living in absolute poverty in 2019. Sanctions have also reduced the national growth rate from 12.5% in 2016 to a paltry 2% at present. Again, with sanctions denying Iran the right to sell its oil abroad, in 2021-22, the petroleum sector contributed just 8% to the economy, crushing the people with inflation and unemployment.

Damage-control initiatives

The government appears to be bewildered by the persistence of the agitations despite the harsh measures of the security forces. This has led to some efforts at ameliorating the situation with palliatives. On December 4, the country's chief prosecutor announced that the morality police had been "abolished", but some hardliners, fearing this concession would be seen as a sign of weakness, denied the news. There have also been reports of the government's outreach to "reformists", represented by former president Mohammad Khatami. But hardliners have denied that any such dialogue has occurred, while Mr. Khatami's associates have said that his suggestions for reform have been rejected by the government.

However, there is a deeper problem: Iran's 'reformists' uphold the Islamic order and only advocate the removal of some of the harsher aspects of the Iranian system, particularly those relating to women. They have little in common with Iran's 'secular republicans' who are spearheading the agitations and seeking an end to the influence of religion in state affairs. Heavily influenced by sections of the Iranian diaspora in the West, these 'secular republicans' believe that Iran's population is becoming more liberal.

> While there could be small steps towards change, especially where women are concerned, the core of the Iranian order is likely to endure

Political outlook

The U.S. has sought regime change in Iran since the Islamic revolution. Hence, not surprisingly, most western commentators believe that the unrest portends the end of the Islamic order, possibly because organisations supporting the regime could be splintering and seeking an alternative basis for governance. The U.S.-based writer, Karim Sadjadpour, believes that Iran's 40-year Islamic Republic will be defeated by the people's commitment to pluralism and patriotism that goes back two millennia. Another distinguished commentator, Ali Ansari says that state repression will lose its stamina over time and give way to a 'supportive hinterland' that will provide new leaders and new manifestoes for reform.

There is reason to doubt the imminent advent of this liberal order. What western observers ignore is the deep-seated antipathy among Iranians for the U.S. and Israel, which are viewed as the principal sources of their misery, most recently through the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement and the imposition of onerous sanctions on Iran. Again, the U.S. has now delayed the finalisation of the nuclear agreement to avoid sanctions relief and maintain economic pressure on the beleaguered regime.

Given the deep roots of Islam in Iranian society and the support provided to the Islamic order by several institutions created by the constitution, there is little likelihood of a collapse - slow or dramatic - of this order. The most that can be expected are some small steps towards change, particularly where women are concerned. But the core of the Iranian order, defined by the co-existence of the supreme leader as the guardian of the revolution and a directly elected president, with both espousing resistance to western hegemony, is likely to endure.

Trust and mistrust in Karnataka

The alleged scam is expected to provide fodder for Congress's attack on the BJP

STATE OF PLAY

K.V. Aditya Bhardwaj

In the run up to the 2023 Assembly polls, an electoral voter data 'theft' scandal with alleged links to the ruling BJP in Bengaluru has given rise to the alarming spectre of possible targeted voter suppression. Even as the government tries to brazen it out, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has ordered a review of the changes made to the electoral rolls in three Assembly constituencies, where there is prima facie evidence of data 'theft'. The Congress party and the Citizens' Commission on Elections have called for an audit of electoral rolls across the city.

It is a common practice to rope in NGOs to carry out Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaigns every year. The Chilume Educational Cultural and Rural Development Trust was roped in for SVEEP activities by the city's civic body, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), from 2017. It has now been revealed that the founders also run a political consultancy firm. They are also allegedly linked to a minister in the BJP government.

Following a complaint by a sub-contractor in September, it came to light that contract employees of Chilume were impersonating booth-level officers and collecting voter data. They were also allegedly collecting information on perceptions of the State government. The police estimate that over 500 contract employees were thus employed. On November 4, BBMP cancelled permission to Chilume to carry out SVEEP activities.

It has now emerged that revenue officers with the city's civic body, tasked with electoral roll revision in the city, had entrusted Chilume with this responsibility as well as with the task of linking Aadhar cards with voter IDs. These tasks cannot be outsourced, as per ECI norms. Based on a complaint by the BBMP, the city police are now probing the scandal and have arrested four revenue officers of the civic body for allegedly colluding with Chilume. The ECI has suspended two IAS officers who were overseeing electoral roll revision in the three Assembly constituencies where fake ID cards claiming that representatives of Chilume Trust were booth-level officers were found. The bureaucrats allege that they are being made scapegoats.

The Congress has demanded that Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who holds charge of Bengaluru Development, resign. Mr. Bommai, on the other hand, has claimed credit for cancelling permission to the Trust to carry out SVEEP activities after irregularities came to light. He has alleged that this is a 'Congress scam', as the NGO was first roped in by the civic body during the Congress regime. He announced that he had ordered a probe into electoral roll revision in the city from 2013, when the Congress took office. But the next day, Manoj Kumar Meena, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Karnataka, issued a statement that electoral roll revision and all matters related to the conduct of elections were the sole domain of the ECI and no government could order a probe into the matter. The CEO ordered a probe by the Regional Commissioner of the Bengaluru Zone, which is under way.

Over 6.84 lakh entries were deleted and 3.07 lakh new entries added to the final electoral roll of 2022 between January 1 and October 30, 2022, in Bengaluru. The ECI has extended the period of claims and objections under the Special Summary Revision by 15 days, and appealed to voters to check their names and submit objections, if any. It directed the CEO, Karnataka, to give the entire lists to all the political parties to help them file objections. It has ordered a "100% check of deletions and additions in electoral rolls in the three Assembly constituencies. As many as 64,286 entries have been deleted in the three constituencies.

However, many have questioned the move to limit the CEO probe to the three Assembly constituencies . Only a credible probe can establish whether electoral data theft and compromise of electoral rolls is limited to these three constituencies alone. Meanwhile, the police claim they are trying to follow the money trail in Chilume Trust to identify the politicians who may have ordered the surveys and benefitted from the data.

The Trust had been feeding voter data into a private app, Digital Sameeksha, which the police are now reviewing. However, police officers well versed with cybercrime probes say that it is impossible to recover all the possible copies of the data. With the winter session of Karnataka's legislature set to begin, the alleged scam is expected to provide fodder to the Congress for its attack on the BJP.

Kerala tops the country in terms of citizens with passports

India ranks low in terms of visa-free/visa-on-arrival regimes for travellers in 2022

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

Indians can enjoy visa-free travel to 22 countries, according to Passport Index, an interactive and real-time ranking tool maintained by Arton Capital (**Table 1**). Three of these countries (Nepal, Bhutan and Mauritius) are in the neighbourhood. There are quite a few Caribbean countries on the list such as Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago besides two Latin American countries (El Salvador and Haiti). Three of the countries are in the Pacific Islands – Micronesia, Vanuatu and Fiji (with a high proportion of Indian-origin citizens), while two African countries provide this facility (Gambia and Senegal). Only one European country – Serbia – allows visa-free travel for Indians.

According to the index, India ranked a joint 69th in 2022 in terms of ease of mobility of travel to other countries. This ease of travel was measured in terms of availability of visa-free regimes or visa on arrival for Indians in other countries.

While India marginally improved in the index (its rank jumped four places from 73 in 2021), it still ranked below many Asian and developing countries. Countries such as South Africa (ranked 46), China (59), Brazil (11) and Russia (37) ranked higher, while India did better compared to other South Asian countries. The largely immigrant-populated UAE was ranked No. 1, followed by European and other developed countries. South Korea (joint 2nd) and Japan (4th) ranked the highest among Asian countries.

More than 9.58 crore passports have been issued in India as of December 8, 2022, according to a reply given by the Ministry of External Affairs in the Lok Sabha recently. This amounts to nearly 7% of India's projected population in 2022.

A State-wise breakup (**Chart 2**) shows that Kerala had both the highest number (nearly 1.13 crore) and the highest proportion (an estimated 31.6% of the State's population) of passport holders in the country. This is not surprising as Kerala is one of the States that has a high expatriate population and also is heavily dependent on remittances (10.2% of all inward remittances to India went to the State as of FY21, according to a recent Reserve Bank of India bulletin). Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu were placed second and third in terms of absolute number of passports. Tamil Nadu was placed higher than Maharashtra in terms of the estimated proportion of population with passports (12.7% versus 8.4%).

In terms of the proportion of population with passports, Kerala was placed first again. It was followed by Punjab (25.3%), Delhi (18.6%), Telangana (13.2%) and Tamil Nadu (12.7%) among the major States and Union Territories. Goa was placed first among the smaller States (29.4%). Kerala was also placed first in the metric of passports not renewed (more than 10 lakh) followed by Tamil Nadu (8.84 lakh), Karnataka (7.73 lakh) and Maharashtra (6.49 lakh).

Among districts (**Chart 3**), Mumbai had the highest total number of passports issued (35,56,067) followed by Bengaluru (34,63,405), Malappuram (19,32,622), Chennai (18,85,855), Hyderabad (18,06,329), Ahmedabad (14,95,009) and Pune (14,52,236). While the estimated district population is difficult to arrive at, as Census 2021 has not yet begun operations, the projected district population based on Aadhaar saturation data shows that the estimated proportion of population in Malappuram with passports could be close to 47.1%, among the highest in the country.

Passport power

Table 1 is sourced from www.passportindex.org. The charts 2 and 3 are sourced from a reply given by the Ministry of External Affairs in the Lok Sabha recently

Table 1 | The table shows the overall score of a country in the 2022 passport index. Indians can enjoy visa-free travel to 22 countries

Country	Score	Visa-free	Visa on arrival	Visa required
South Korea	174	122	52	24
Japan	172	121	51	26
Brazil	161	110	51	37
Russia	124	79	45	74
South Africa	108	65	43	90
China	84	32	52	114
India	73	22	48	125
Sri Lanka	55	18	37	143
Pakistan	44	10	34	154
Afghanistan	39	5	34	159

Chart 2 | Chart shows the number of passports issued State-wise as of December 8, 2022 on the horizontal axis and as a % share of population on the vertical axis

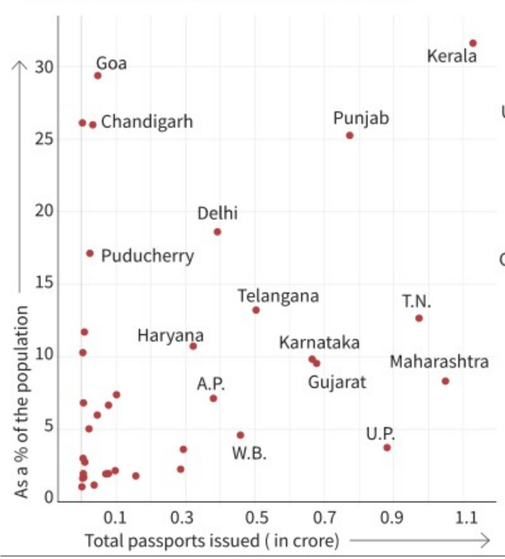
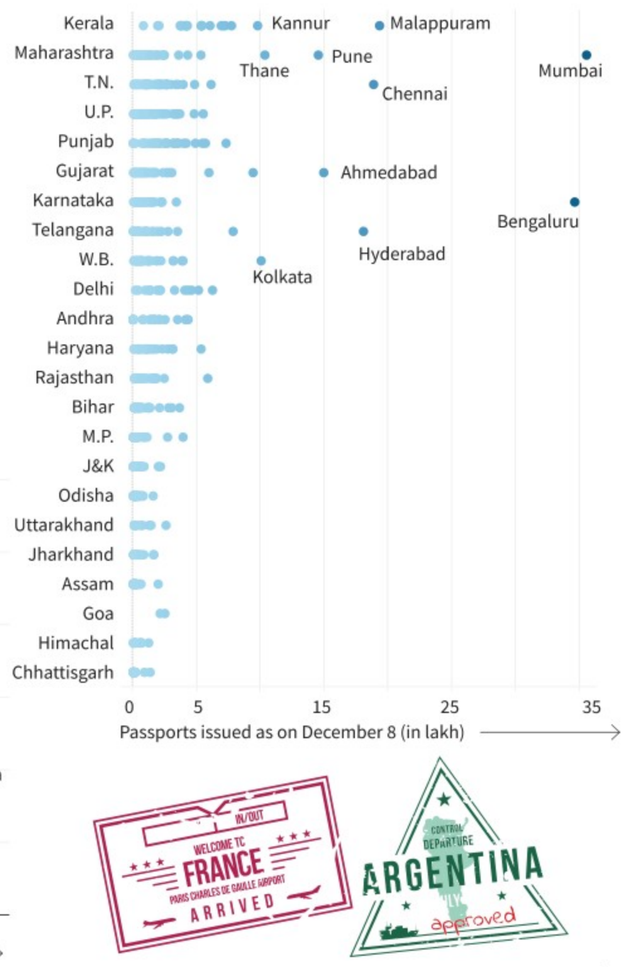


Chart 3 | Chart shows the number of passports issued district-wise as of December 8, 2022. Each dot corresponds to a district and the farther to the right, the more the number of passports issued



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 19, 1972

U.S. resumes full-scale bombing of N. Vietnam

Washington, Dec. 18: The United States has resumed full-scale bombing of North Vietnam and will continue it until Hanoi agrees to a settlement of the war, the White House said to-day. President Nixon had ordered the resumption of the bombing north of 20th Parallel "to cope with another enemy build-up, and forestall a possible communist offensive," the White House added. But the Presidential Press Secretary, Mr. Ronald Ziegler, refused to link Mr. Nixon's decision to the current stalemate in peace talks. "We are not going to allow the peace talks to be used as a cover for another offensive," Mr. Ziegler told reporters. "The road to a negotiated peace is wide open," Mr. Ziegler said. "We want a rapid settlement to this conflict." He said the U.S. would continue working with both South Vietnam and North Vietnam in the hope of achieving a settlement but added: "Our policy is designed to deal with an enemy build-up which could lead to another offensive in the south. The President will continue to order any action he deems necessary by air or by sea to prevent any build-up he sees in the south," he added. In Saigon, the U.S. Command announced that the U.S. had resumed bombing attacks against the Hanoi-Haiphong area of North Vietnam. "We are conducting air strikes throughout North Vietnam against military targets from which North Vietnam is supporting continued infiltration into an attack against South Vietnam," a U.S. Command spokesman said. "This includes the Hanoi-Haiphong area," he added.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 19, 1922

Plague in Nilgiris

Coonoor, Dec. 17: Major Russell, I.M.S. Director of Public Health, has arrived here at the order of the Government to investigate the cause of annual visitation of plague in the Nilgiris, and to take steps to prevent the same. He discussed with Colonel Pridmore A.D.M.S., of Madras District, plague measures at the barracks and, in company with the Municipal Chairman, inspected the news. A draft of 130 men for the 1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment will arrive here from England on the 19th instant.

From Page One

Citizenship rules for 6 groups to be eased

"For a Pakistani Hindu who entered India in 2010, the online system does not accept the expired passport, leading to the application not being accepted. The person or family has to then rush to the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi, which charges a hefty sum to renew the passports and sometimes reject it on flimsy grounds. Though the person is eligible to get Indian citizenship under the 1955 Act, as he or she has spent around 12 years in India, they face hurdles," Mr. Singh said.

In 2015, the Ministry amended the Citizenship Rules and legalised the stay of migrants belonging to these six communities who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, due to religious persecution, by exempting them from the provisions of the Passport Act and the Foreigners Act even as their passports expired. Though they are exempt from facing any criminal action for illegally staying in India, the online portal still does not accept the expired documents to process their applications. "Changes will be made to the online portal so that foreign passports and visas that have passed their validity can be accepted as a supporting document to apply for citizenship," the source said. People seeking Indian citizenship either come on long-term visas (LTVs) or pilgrim visas. The LTVs given for five years are considered a precursor to citizenship.

CAA not yet in force

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, that intends to grant citizenship to undocumented (or illegal) migrants from these six non-Muslim communities from the three neighbouring countries is yet to come into force as the rules that govern the law are yet to be notified. The CAA could have helped the documented minority migrants in fast-tracking their applications as it reduces the mandatory requirement of 11-year aggregate stay in India to five years, to be eligible for citizenship.

Thousands waiting

According to Mr. Singh, there are 18,000 registered Pakistani Hindus who await citizenship.

According to the Ministry's report for 2021-22, from April to December 2021, 1,414 citizenship were granted to members of the minority groups from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Missile destroyer *INS Mormugao* commissioned into Indian Navy

The warship with full-load displacement of 7,400 tonnes is named after the historic port city of Mormugao on the west coast; it is propelled by four powerful gas turbines, has enhanced stealth features and is equipped with BrahMos cruise missiles

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Shot in the arm: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the INS Mormugao commissioning ceremony at Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

In this era of globalisation, almost all nations are dependent on each other in the field of trade and hence rule-based freedom of navigation and security of sea lanes have become more important than ever for stability and economic progress of the world, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday. He was speaking in Mumbai at the commissioning ceremony of *INS Mormugao*, the second of four stealth guided missile destroyers being built under Project-15B.

Named after the historic port city of Goa on the west coast, Mormugao, the ship was commissioned on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule.

"Economic, political and trade relations between countries are constantly evolving. The COVID-19 pandemic, situation in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Ukraine – it directly or indirectly impacts every country in one way or another," Mr. Singh said.

During the ceremony, the Commanding Officer, Captain Kapil Bhatia, read out the Ship's Commissioning Warrant. Subsequently, the Naval Ensign was hoisted onboard for the first time and the Commissioning Pennant broken (unfurled) on the main mast to the National Anthem played by the Naval Band, a Defence Ministry statement said.

Indigenous content

"With over 75% indigenous content, it [*INS Mormugao*] is a testimony to India's excellence in design and development of warships and a shining example of our growing indigenous defence production capabilities. The warship will meet the present and future needs of our country and of our friendly countries," Mr. Singh said.

Stating that the country's growing economy is directly connected to increasing trade, most of which is through sea routes, Mr. Singh said India's interests are directly linked to the Indian Ocean. India being an important country in this region, the role of the Indian Navy becomes more important in its security, he added.

The 163-metre-long warship has a full-load displacement of 7,400 tonnes. "The overall indigenous content of the project is approximately 75%," the Navy said.

Construction contract

The contract for construction of four ships under Project-15B was signed in January 2011 at a project cost of about ₹29,643.74 crore. The design of the ships has been developed in-house by the Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd., Mumbai. They are a follow-on of the Kolkata class destroyers and named after major cities from all four corners of the country – Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal and Surat. *INS Visakhapatnam*, was commissioned in 2021. *INS Imphal* and *INS Surat* are at various stages of outfitting and trials.

INS Mormugao is propelled by four powerful gas turbines capable of achieving speeds in excess of 30 knots, the Navy said, stating that it has enhanced stealth features resulting in a reduced radar cross section.

These ships are equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and long-range surface-to-air missiles. Some of the major indigenised equipment and systems aboard *INS Mormugao* include surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, torpedo tubes and launchers, anti-submarine rocket launchers and super rapid gun mount, besides combat management system, integrated platform management system, automated power management system, foldable hangar doors, helo-traversing system, close-in weapon system, and bow-mounted SONAR, the Navy said.

Kejriwal asks nation to boycott goods from China

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hitting out at the Narendra Modi government for continuing trade with China even as Indian soldiers put their lives on the line during the recent face-off in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to the nation to boycott Chinese goods.

"This is the 21st century, and no country can just take over the territory of another country. In the modern world, it is all about trade and economics. The day we show some courage and stop this $95-billion import, China will be put in its place," Mr. Kejriwal said. He criticised the Central government for not providing a conducive environment for India to become a manufacturing hub due to which high networth Indian citizens are leaving the country

National status

Mr. Kejriwal was speaking at the AAP's 11th National Council Meet that was being held after the party achieved a national status. He said AAP was a whiff of fresh air for the people of the country as it fought elections on the basis of work done and work it intends to do rather than indulging in negative politics of name-calling.

Choked capital

No fresh air: A thick layer of toxic smog engulfs Jama Masjid in Old Delhi on Sunday morning. The air quality in Delhi was recorded in the 'very poor' category on Sunday with AQI at 322. The minimum temperature in the national capital settled at 6.2 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Delhi HC allows random dope test for pilots, cabin crew, air traffic controllers

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

Four pilots and a controller have tested positive for psychoactive substances till August

The Delhi High Court has cleared the decision to require random drug testing of aviation personnel, including pilots, cabin crew and air traffic controllers.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh said, "After perusing CAR [Civil Aviation Requirement] as also after hearing parties and their counsel, it is clear that the testing of personnel for psychoactive substances is essential, considering the nature of services being rendered." The Indian Pilots Guild and the Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) Guild moved the High Court in February challenging Section 5 of the CAR dealing with air safety, issued by the Centre in 2021.

The CAR, which came into effect on January 31, prescribes random testing of aviation personnel to detect any behavioural, cognitive and physiological changes due to use of psychoactive substances. The testing is done to check for substances such as amphetamine and amphetamine-type stimulants, opiates and metabolites, cannabis (marijuana), cocaine, barbiturates and benzodiazepine. Testing is done on urine samples collected from the randomly selected employees. Till August, four pilots and an ATC have tested positive for psychoactive substances.

Six substances tested

The pilots and ATCs raised various apprehensions before the court, arguing that there was no provision to consider the consumption of lifestyle medication such as medicines for hypertension or diabetes.

They also contended that the working of the rules is itself ambiguous due to the lack of a sufficient number of qualified medical review officers. Additionally, there are no guidelines for appellate remedies or other remedies, if action is taken under CAR against aviation personnel, they said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), however, assured the court that the testing is done only for the six notified substances which "do not generally include hypertension medicines or anti-diabetic medications".

Threats to Kashmiri Pandit staff belie Centre's claims: Cong.

Press Trust of India
JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Sunday said the recent terror threats to the Kashmiri Pandit employees in the Valley, belied the government's claims of normalcy.

A blog linked to The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, released separate lists of employees who were recruited under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package (PMRP), and threatened to turn their transit colonies into "graveyards". The government recently informed Parliament that 118 civilians, including five Kashmiri Pandits and 16 other Hindus and Sikhs, were killed in Jammu and Kashmir between August 2019 and July this year.

Hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits and other reserved category employees had shifted to Jammu in May under threat from terrorists. They are currently on a protest for over 200 days, demanding the relocation of the Kashmiri Hindu employees outside the Valley.

"Quite recently... hit lists have been issued by the TRF, we ask the Lt. Governor to please explain how these employees can go back to their duties in such circumstances," Jammu and Kashmir Congress spokesperson Deepika Singh Rajawat told reporters. "While he does not lose a minute to showcase his fairytale normalcy to his masters in Delhi, the bubble of his lies bursts factually when these lists are being published every other day," she said.

She said her party was fully convinced that the BJP and L-G administration had made it a "matter of ego" as they feared that if they succumbed to the pressure of the employees, their "extravaganza of normalcy would be exposed."

Maharashtra govt. to bring anti-graft law, says Fadnavis

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

The Maharashtra government has approved the Anna Hazare Committee report on introducing a Lokayukta in the State along the lines of the Centre's Lokpal law, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Sunday.

Speaking after a special Cabinet meeting, Mr. Fadnavis said the Chief Minister and the State Cabinet would be brought within the Lokayukta's ambit.

"The recommendations of the panel led by social activist Anna Hazare have been accepted completely. The Lokayukta will be a retired Chief Justice of the High Court or a Supreme Court [judge]," he said, adding that a Bill will be brought in the Winter Session.

The Anti-corruption Act will be made a part of this law, and the Lokayukta will have a team of five people.

Net direct tax revenue up 20%, gross mop-up rises 26% to ₹13.63 lakh crore

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's net direct tax collections in 2022-23 surpassed the ₹11-lakh crore mark by December 17, reflecting a 19.81% uptick over last year's, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said on Sunday. Last year, in the corresponding period, it was ₹9,47,959 crore.

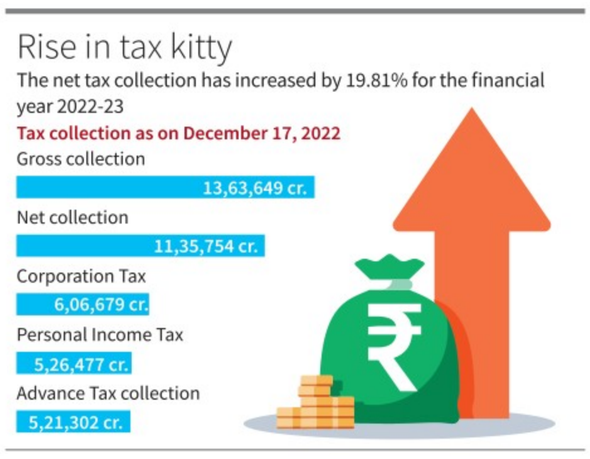
"The net direct tax collection of ₹11,35,754 crore includes corporation tax (CIT) at ₹6,06,679 crore (net of refund) and personal income tax, including securities transaction tax at ₹5,26,477 crore (net of refund)," it said in a statement.

Prior to effecting refunds, the gross direct tax kitty for this year has risen 25.9% at ₹13.63 lakh crore compared to ₹10.83 lakh crore in the corresponding period of 2021-22.

This included advance tax collections of ₹5,21,302 crore, tax deducted at source of ₹6,44,761 crore and self-assessment tax of ₹1.4 lakh crore.

Net direct tax collections had registered a 24.3% growth by November 30 to reach ₹8.77 lakh crore, and while the growth rate has slowed since then, the overall kitty was bolstered this month by advance tax collections for the October to December quarter.

The cumulative advance tax collections for the first, second and third quarter of 2022-23 are 12.83% higher than the ₹4.62 lakh crore collected in the same period last year, the statement said. The ₹5,21,302 crore advance tax revenues include CIT of ₹3,97,364 crore and personal income tax collections of ₹1,23,936 crore.



Over 3,000 govt. services to be added for online delivery

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Over 3,100 new government services will be added for online delivery during the five-day Good Governance Week that begins from Monday, a statement from the Personnel Ministry on Sunday said.

A host of good governance activities have been planned during the nationwide campaign based on the theme '*Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore*' (Governance Towards Village).

New campaign

As many as 3,120 services identified by the District Collectors will be added for online service delivery during the five-day '*Prashasan Gaon ki Ore*' campaign to be inaugurated by Union Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh on Monday at Vigyan Bhawan here, the statement said.

APPEAL

I am Raghunath aged 54 years old residing at Alappuzha, Kerala. The onset of Muscular Dystrophy in my life made me immobile which has taken a toll on seventy five percent of my body. I am in urgent need of an electric wheel chair to gain mobility and a world of opportunities. This wheelchair costs around **Rs.90,000/-**. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.60182010063310, IFSC No.CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. Your e-mail ID is requested.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd. Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No.GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

Raghunath

Fadnavis should be CM, says chief of BJP in Maharashtra

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

The State will surge ahead under his leadership, says Chandrashekhar Bawankule at event

BJP State president Chandrashekhar Bawankule raised political eyebrows on Sunday, after remarking that Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ought to be the Chief Minister for the development of the State.

Speaking at an event in Nagpur, the BJP State chief hinted to his audience that as long as he was the party's State unit president, Mr. Fadnavis ought to become the Chief Minister. While calculatedly not uttering the word "Chief Minister", Mr. Bawankule left his sentence incomplete while exhorting the audience to fill in the words.

After persons from the audience shouted "Chief Minister", Mr. Bawankule continued his speech, stating, "We all need to work in such a manner that he [Mr. Fadnavis] will get that post."

He said that Maharashtra should repeat the cycle from 2014 to 2019 (when Mr. Fadnavis was the Chief Minister) and that the State would surge ahead under his leadership.

"Mr. Fadnavis has worked to give justice to every community... He has never expected anything... It is our responsibility to ensure that Mr. Fadnavis gets the top post. He is the only one who can make the State's future," Mr. Bawankule said.

The BJP, which came to power in June by toppling Uddhav Thackeray's Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, had supported rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde's intra-party revolt. The decision to make Mr. Shinde, and not Mr. Fadnavis, the Chief Minister had come as a surprise to many BJP party workers and leaders.

Shinde's post

Former BJP State chief Chandrakant Patil, now a Cabinet Minister, had remarked that it was "with a heavy heart" that the party had ceded the top post to Mr. Shinde.

Meanwhile, following Mr. Bawankule's remark, Shinde-faction leader and Minister Shambhuraj Desai said there was no need to read too much into the BJP State president's remarks, and said the Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena (Mr. Shinde's faction) would contest the 2024 Lok Sabha election in alliance with the BJP.

However, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Amol Mitkari said that Mr. Bawankule's statement was clear evidence that it was Mr. Fadnavis who had the real power in the present government, while Mr. Shinde was "merely a puppet Chief Minister."

Northeast is not last part of country but gateway for trade and ties: Modi

At Shillong, the Prime Minister highlighted that Centre has been investing heavily in the region; he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects estimated at over ₹2,450 crore

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Union government had been investing heavily in Northeast India with his government's motto being "Act fast for northeast and act first for northeast".

Addressing the golden jubilee celebration of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Meghalaya's capital, Shillong, he said the Centre was spending ₹7 lakh crore in the region now as against ₹2 lakh crore after India's Independence.

Established in 1971 and formally inaugurated in 1972, the NEC is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the northeastern region comprising eight States.

Mr. Modi attributed the focus on the northeast to the change in the way the Centre had been looking at the region since 2014.

"For us, the northeast in not the last part of the country, but the peace and development gateway for trade and other ties with Southeast Asian countries," he said.

Slamming the previous governments for ignoring areas along the international borders in the region, he said the government's vibrant border village programme would help develop these areas on a par with urban centres and prevent outmigration.

The Prime Minister noted that the number of airports in the region increased from nine to 16 and the number of flights increased from 900 to 1,900 in the last eight years. "Work is now under way to connect all the State capitals of the region by railway," he said.

He also underscored the 50% increase in the length of national highways in the region since 2014, insisting that the infrastructure projects gained momentum after the launch of the PM-DevINE scheme.

Mr. Modi said the government has been working on improving digital connectivity in the northeast by increasing the optical fibre network with 6,000 mobile towers being set up at a cost of ₹5,000 crore. "The *Atmanirbhar* 5G infrastructure will help develop the start-up ecosystem and service sector in the region," he said.

Earlier, he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects worth over ₹2,450 crore. These include an integrated beekeeping development centre and 21 Hindi libraries for Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Assam.

Addressing the golden jubilee function of the NEC as its chairperson, Home Minister Amit Shah said the northeast had improved vastly in terms of funding, peace, development and connectivity after Mr. Modi took charge at the Centre.

Grand event: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Governor Brigadier B.D. Mishra (retd) at the golden jubilee celebrations of the North Eastern Council, in Shillong. PTI

INBRIEF

Red-carded development hurdles in northeast: PM

Ahead of the football World Cup final between Argentina and France, Prime Minister Narendra Modi (photo shows his entourage) used football as a metaphor for development in the northeast. Addressing the golden jubilee of the North Eastern Council in Shillong on Sunday, the PM said, "We all know a player is shown the red card and ejected from the football field for foul play and behaviour contrary to sportsmanship. We have since 2014 red-carded all hurdles in the way of the development of the northeast." "Our eyes are on Qatar to see two foreign teams fighting it out for the World Cup. But that day is not far off when we will cheer an Indian team on the field with the Tricolour flying high," he added.

Modi is running away from a debate on China issue: Cong.

The Congress on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "running away" from a debate in Parliament on the situation along the border with China and said he, and not the Defence Minister, must answer on the issue. The Opposition party also posed questions to the government on the issue, saying the nation demands and deserves answers. In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked what emboldened the Chinese to try taking over the Indian post in the Yangtse area of Tawang after two years of a protracted "disengagement". India has dominated Yangtse since Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi deployed forces there in 1986 during the Sumdorong Chu confrontation, Mr. Ramesh said and asked how the Chinese dared to open a new front. The party also alleged that Mr. Modi does not utter the word "China" and asked whether the government was "silent" due to its "close ties" with that country. PTI

Shinde government has not acted 'aggressively' on boundary issue: Opposition

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

Ajit Pawar and other leaders addressing a press conference on the eve of Winter Session of Maharashtra Assembly on Sunday. PTI

A stormy Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislature is in the offing with the Opposition tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance planning to corner the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government over the Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary dispute, the loss of big-ticket investments to the State and agrarian distress.

The session begins in Nagpur on Monday.

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Ajit Pawar on Sunday said that the Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena -BJP government led by Eknath Shinde had not acted "aggressively enough" on the boundary issue.

"While the Karnataka-Maharashtra boundary problem has been there for a long time, this is the first time that the Karnataka Chief Minister [Basavaraj Bommai] has made aggressive remarks about acquiring districts in Maharashtra and our State government has failed to give a fitting reply," Mr. Pawar said.

He was flanked by Congress State chief Nana Patole and Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena leader Ambadas Danve.

Meanwhile, in his weekly column '*Rokhthok*' in the party mouthpiece *Saamana*, the Uddhav camp leader Sanjay Raut, MP, said that the boundary dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka "was a struggle for humanity" and not a fight between people and governments of the States.

He also chided Prime Minister Narendra Modi for failing to intervene in the dispute.

Bharat Jodo Yatra is a 'spectacle not to miss', but its impact on votes remains unknown

Sobhana K. Nair
DAUSA

At the overcrowded Sikandra market where the Bharat Jodo Yatra has stopped for lunch, a group of women sporting bright dupattas argue with a police constable, imploring him to let them inside the white tent that he is guarding, where they believe Rahul Gandhi is resting. They have been waiting since morning to catch a glimpse of the Congress leader. After many minutes, they give up, disappointment writ large on their faces.

It is the 102nd day of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, currently traversing through Dausa district of Rajasthan, a Congress-ruled State, on its 3,500-km route.

Curiosity about Mr. Gandhi is a major factor bringing in the crowds. If participation is the only parameter, the yatra is an overwhelming success. Every inch of the ground and every available vantage point is covered with people. Many have been lining up since 5 a.m., straining every sinew to spot Mr. Gandhi.

Surging crowds: Rahul Gandhi waving at supporters during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Dausa, Rajasthan on Sunday. PTI

Deeper interest

However, the question foremost in the minds of Congress leaders here is whether this curiosity will actually lead to a deeper interest in the party.

The yatra so far has successfully preached to the choir: the Congress supporters and workers streaming back from the yatra confidently list out the several welfare schemes launched by the Ashok Gehlot government in the State. Foremost on their mind is the Chiranjeevi health insurance scheme of the government.

"The surging crowds at the yatra are a clear sign that the Congress could buck the trend of alternating power with the BJP. The State government has brought in many pro-poor schemes, and overall, we are happy with the Ashok Gehlot government," said 32-year-old Vijay Kumar, who runs a mobile shop. He flaunts his photographs from his recent Kashmir trip and is clear about his electoral choices. "In Assembly [polls], it is the Congress, but in Lok Sabha [elections], it is the BJP all the way," he said.

Even amid high spirits, nagging doubts surface. "This is the first time in three-and-a- half years that the Congress worker feels needed. Since the Manesar revolt by [former Deputy Chief Minister] Sachin Pilot, 20 out of the 31 districts in the State haven't had a district president. Political workers aren't paid; we survive on the prestige that such party posts give us," Anil Bhogia, a Congress leader from Dausa, said.

He hopes that after the yatra wraps up, the party's organisation will finally shape up in time for the elections which are just 12 months away.

The key message of the yatra – to oppose the politics of hatred and division – is largely lost on an audience which is far more comfortable assessing governments on the scale of the benefits they have received.

Ramji Lal Chhawadi, a farmer from Reta village, is a self-confessed BJP supporter. In spite of his political affiliation, he stayed up the whole night at the highway, watching the preparations for the yatra. It was a spectacle he wasn't ready to miss. "Yatra or no yatra, it is time for the Congress to go. Corruption makes everyday life difficult. The Gehlot government has not done anything for landed farmers. Other than ₹6,000 annually that the Modi government gives us, no one really cares for us," he said. Many others sitting around him nod along.

Inclusion of communities on ST list still on the backburner

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Over the past one week, while Parliament has discussed the inclusion of various communities on the Scheduled Tribe lists of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Himachal Pradesh, Opposition MPs, specifically from Odisha, have questioned the government about the list of communities that were already recommended for inclusion on a priority basis over eight years ago by a government task force.

The task force, constituted in February 2014 under the leadership of former Tribal Affairs Secretary Hrusikesh Panda, had compiled a comprehensive list of over 40 communities from across the country that it felt should be included on the ST lists on a priority basis. Of those communities, nine are in Odisha, 26 are part of the tea tribes in Assam, eight are in Chhattisgarh, and a few are in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

A few of them are subsets of communities already categorised as STs, a few others are phonetic variations of existing tribes, a few are ones which were left out when States were bifurcated, others still are those omitted from lists inexplicably, and a few more are those losing out on categorisation because they were forcibly taken away from their homelands as indentured labour to other States or were displaced by industrialisation, the task force had concluded.

The communities

Kandha Kumbhar, Jodia (and synonyms), Chuktia Bhunjia, Saara, Mankidia, Porja (and synonyms), Banda Paraja, Durua (and synonyms), and Paharia (in specific districts) communities are the ones in Odisha. In Tamil Nadu, it recommended the Pulayan (and synonyms) community. In Andhra Pradesh, it suggested the Konda Kumari community (and its synonyms).

The task force had concluded that as many as 26 of the tea tribes of Assam, those who were forcibly taken as indentured labourers from States such as Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, should be included on the ST list. It justified this "based on the key principle that the 'indentured labourers' are a category which is distinct from 'voluntary migration'". It had also recommended for inclusion tribal communities of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh that had been displaced on account of the Narmada Dam Project, and various Devnagri versions of tribes on the ST list of Chhattisgarh, such as Bharia, Pando, Gadaba, Bhuihar, Nagasia, Dhangad and Kond.

Significantly, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha this Winter Session, proposing the inclusion of nearly all of the above mentioned synonyms on the ST list of Chhattisgarh. This Bill is expected to be taken up for discussion on Monday.

Odisha MP Chandrani Murmu (BJP), in the Lok Sabha last week, asked the Minister of Tribal Affairs to expedite the process of including the communities in Odisha on a priority basis. She had also pointed out that the Centre was currently sitting on the State's government recommendations to include as many as 160 communities on the State's ST list since the 1970s.

The task force had noted that these communities continued to be excluded or were facing delays in inclusion due to the current procedure and criteria for inclusion on ST lists and had recommended changes to both.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग वृत, सिरोही
क्रमांकः- एकाउंट/निविदा/2022-23/3135 दिनांक : 12-12-22
-: निविदा संशोधन सूचना 06/2022-23 : -
इस कार्यालय द्वारा जारी निविदा सूचना संख्या 06/2022-23 में अंकित कार्य **डीएमएफटी योजनान्तर्गत एनएच 14 से मोरली नयाखेडा सड़क सुदृढ़ीकरण एवं नवीनीकरण कार्य किमी 0/0 से 7/500** की निविदाएं ऑनलाईन प्रस्तुत किये जाने की दिनांक 27.01.2023 को सायं 6.00 बजे तक बढ़ाई जाती है। तकनीकी निविदायें दिनांक 28.01.2023 को प्रातः 11.00 बजे सम्बंधित कार्यालय में ऑनलाईन खोली जायेगी। निविदा की अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेगी।
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DIPR/C/16028/2022 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सा.नि.वि. वृत सिरोही

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, वृत चूरू भीमे
क्रमांकः :- 2279-2300 दिनांक :- 12.12.2022
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राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से जिला चूरू में सड़क निर्माण कार्य हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान एवं राज्य सरकार के अन्य विभागों तथा केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों / केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग / डाक एवं दूर संचार विभाग / रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के "एए" श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से कार्यों हेतु ई-टेण्डरिंग के माध्यम से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में प्राप्त की जावेगी । निविदा से संबंधित विवरण बेवसाईट साईट www.dipronline.org व www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in एवं www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है ।
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सानिवि वृत चूरू
DIPR/C/15962/22

INBRIEF

India's Sargam Koushal wins Mrs World 2022 title

Sargam Koushal was named Mrs World 2022, beating contestants from 63 countries to bring the title back to India after 21 years. Mrs World 2021 Shaylyn Ford of the U.S. presented the crown to Mumbai-based Mrs. Koushal at a ceremony held at Westgate Las Vegas Resort and Casino on Saturday evening. Mrs Polynesia was named the first runner-up, followed by Mrs Canada as the second runner-up. The Mrs India pageant announced the winner on its official Instagram page on Sunday. "The long wait is over, it's after 21 years we have the CROWN back!" read the post. "We've got the crown back after 21-22 years. I'm so excited. Love you India, love you world," Mrs. Koushal said. PTI

Man charged with murder of wife and children in the U.K.

The male suspect being questioned by the U.K. police in connection with the murder of an Indian nurse and her two children has been charged with three counts of murder and will appear in court on Monday. Saju Chelavalel, 52, husband of the deceased nurse Anju Asok, was charged by the Northamptonshire Police with the murder of 35-year-old Asok, Jeeva Saju (6) and Janvi Saju (4). The police confirmed the cause of death for all three victims as asphyxiation. "Our thoughts continue to be with the family of Anju, Jeeva and Janvi, who we are determined to seek justice for," said Detective Inspector Simon Barnes, Senior Investigating Officer. PTI

Union Health Ministry holds meeting on HPV vaccine

The Union Health Ministry held a meeting with domestic and international pharmaceutical companies for the introduction of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine against cervical cancer among children in the national immunisation programme next year, official sources said. Representatives of the Pune-based Serum Institute of India and American pharmaceutical company Merck were present in the meeting, they said. "The Ministry is likely to float a global tender in early 2023 for 16.02 crore doses of HPV vaccine which will be supplied by 2026," an official source stated. PTI

Portion of bridge collapses in Bihar before inauguration

A portion of the bridge collapsed on Sunday before its inauguration in Bihar's Begusarai district. The bridge was constructed under the Chief Minister NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) scheme but could not be inaugurated due to lack of approach road. The 206-metre bridge over the Budhi Gandak river between Aakriti Tola Chowki and Bishanpur in Begusarai district was constructed in 2017 at a cost of over ₹13 crore but its front portion collapsed and fell into the river. No casualty was reported. Recently, a crack was noticed on the front portion of the bridge but no action was taken to repair it, villagers said.

India pushes for new biodiversity fund

At the COP-15 biodiversity conference in Montreal, the country said the developing nations bear most of the burden of implementing the targets for conservation and therefore, require adequate funds and technology transfer for this purpose; discussions also held on eliminating subsidies

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

There is an urgent need to create a new and dedicated fund to help developing countries successfully implement a post-2020 global framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, India has said at the U.N. biodiversity conference in Canada's Montreal.

The country said that conservation of biodiversity must also be based on common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR) as climate change also impacts nature. As the 196 parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) finalise negotiations for a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) – a new set of goals and targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss – there have been repeated calls for the inclusion of the CBDR principle in finance-related targets.

Addressing the stocktaking plenary at CBD COP-15, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said the successful implementation of a post-2020 GBF would depend on the "ways and means we put in place for an equally ambitious resource mobilisation mechanism".

"There is a need to create a new and dedicated mechanism for the provision of financial resources to developing-country parties. Such a fund should be operationalised at the earliest to ensure effective implementation of the post-2020 GBF by all countries," the Minister said.

So far, the Global Environment Facility which caters to multiple conventions, including the UNFCCC and UN Convention to Combat Desertification, remains the only source of funding for biodiversity conservation.

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav addresses the stocktaking plenary at the UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal.

At CBD COP15, developing countries have been demanding a new and dedicated biodiversity fund, saying the existing multilateral sources are not up to the task of meeting the requirements of the GBF. Differences with rich countries on the matter had prompted representatives from developing nations to walk out of crucial financing talks last week. India said developing countries bear the burden of implementing the targets for conservation of biodiversity and, therefore require funds and technology transfer for this purpose.

Established as the seventh principle of the Rio Declaration adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, CBDR is defined as states have common but differentiated responsibilities in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation.

However, applying the CBDR principle to biodiversity conservation has not been straightforward as compared to climate negotiations, and there have been repeated disagreements between the global north and south.

At CBD COP15, the parties are also trying to achieve a consensus on eliminating subsidies that are harmful to the environment, such as subsidies for fossil fuel production, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, by at least $500 billion annually and using this money for biodiversity conservation.

However, Mr. Yadav said that India does not agree on reducing the agriculture-related subsidy and redirecting the savings for biodiversity conservation, as there are many other national priorities.

Mr. Yadav said biodiversity conservation requires ecosystems to be conserved and restored holistically. It is in this context that ecosystem approaches for conservation of biodiversity need to be adopted rather than going for nature-based solutions, he said.

He said the GBF must recognise the responsibility of the developing countries towards poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Concern over Chinese contractors holds up India-Nepal power trade

Suhasini Haidar
KATHMANDU/DELHI

India-Nepal hydro-power trade is set to become a regional game-changer, say officials in Delhi and Kathmandu, pointing to the possibilities of buying power from Nepal and making it available over an electric grid system to consumers in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

However, India's opposition to the use of Chinese contractors in the projects is delaying the process, said Nepal Electricity Authority Managing Director Kul Man Ghising, calling upon New Delhi to reconsider its stand on buying electricity from the 456-MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project (UTK-HEP), Nepal's largest.

With India refusing to purchase power from the project for its grid, Nepal's government has now asked New Delhi to allow a bilateral transmission from the power plant to Bangladesh, which has been willing to buy the power.

"We have noted India's concerns with Chinese investment or ownership in our power projects, but how can we control contractors on projects that are done by global bidding," asked Kul Man Ghising, speaking at a World Bank conference on South Asia last week.

A view of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric project.

The Upper Tamakoshi plant, which has been operational since 2021, was constructed by a number of contractors chosen through an international tender, including the civil construction by China's Sinohydro and Austria's Andritz Hydro, for the supply of electro-mechanical equipment, and India's KEC International for the 220-kV transmission line and sub-station.

Situated close to the Nepal border with Tibet, the project on the Tamakoshi river was called "Nepal's Three Gorges dam", given its size and its contribution to making Nepal a power-surplus country in the "wet" or rainy season. After four years of negotiations, India and Nepal signed a path-breaking Power Trading Agreement (PTA) in 2014, agreeing to the exchange of electricity and cooperation in the hydro-power sector, and Indian companies are involved in developing several Nepali projects.

However, in 2021, after the military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) over Chinese transgressions, the government issued a number of financial measures on Chinese investment and imports, including new "Procedure for Approval and Facilitating Import/Export (Cross Border) of Electricity".

The procedure included clause (6.3(i)) that prohibited trade with power plants that had ownership from a country that shares "land border" with India but has no bilateral power treaty with India – indicating China and Pakistan.

The Upper Tamakoshi project is owned entirely by Nepali entities, said Mr. Ghising.

In addition, he pointed out that that the civil contractor's work had been completed before the Indian guidelines came into place.

"If it had been cleared [by India], we would have been exporting 800 MW of hydro-power last year," he told *The Hindu*, more than double the amount allowed by India at present (364 MW).

"We agree that since this is an Indian policy for investment, we don't submit those projects in Nepal that have [investment from China]. But contractors cannot be restricted," he added.

When asked, former Indian Power Secretary and energy consultant R.V. Shahi said that the hold-up on the Upper Tamakoshi was due to a problem in interpretation and should be clarified or resolved at the earliest.

Experts pointed out that India's policy on solar power, and plans to generate as much as 280 GW by 2030 as part of its fight against climate change has no such restrictions, given that India imports nearly 80% of the components for solar power from China.

Keonjhar finalises beneficiaries 7 years after DMF scheme

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

DMF-Keonjhar Board approved 106 new villages as those directly affected by mining operations

Odisha's Keonjhar district is India's highest recipient of funds under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) scheme, and has spent ₹3,000 crore under the scheme over the past seven years, but the district has only recently finalised who the real beneficiaries are.

At its meeting last month, the 11th Trust Board of DMF-Keonjhar approved 106 new villages as those directly affected by mining operations, taking the total tally of such villages to 491. According to the Trust Board, all other villages in Keonjhar will be treated as indirectly affected as well.

With a geographical area of 8,303 sq. km, Keonjhar is hugely rich in mineral reserves, especially iron ore. The district has 2,555 million tonnes of iron ore beneath its soil, of which approximately 50 million tonnes is extracted each year, a key driver of Odisha's economy.

The DMF fund is augmented by mining companies' contribution of 30% of their royalty amount for mining leases. In Keonjhar, the total DMF fund collection has touched an astounding ₹8,840 crore, the highest for any district in India.

The DMF holds enormous potential to improve the lives of people in Keonjhar, a district where 62% of the population lives below the poverty line, especially marginalised groups such as tribals and other forest dwelling communities.

Keonjhar-based activist Himanshu Kuanr said, "DMF projects are often inflated and not need-based. The fund is being utilised to appease political masters. Many directly affected villages largely remain outside of DMF ambit."

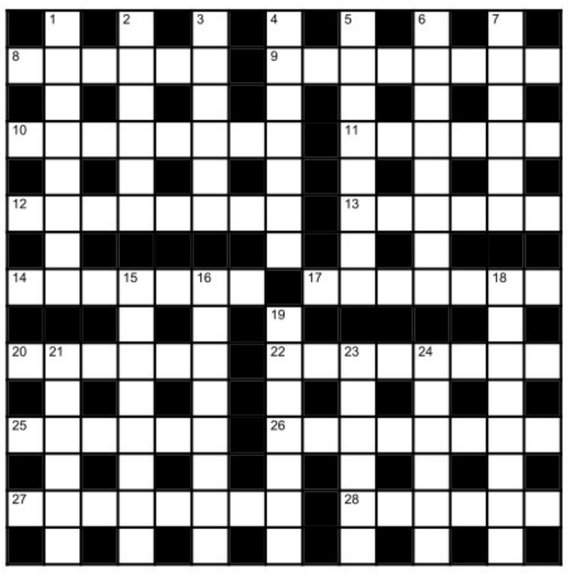
Of the ₹8,840 crore received under the DMF fund, 1,530 projects worth ₹6,434.51 crore have been sanctioned, while ₹3,520.75 crore have been spent. Mr. Kuanr said that a "performance audit should have been carried out with respect to DMF fund utilisation", adding that funds cannot be wasted as they are limited.

TH CROSSWORD + 13740

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 In the middle, a man (good man) is holding a demonstration primarily (6)
9 Triumphant one, British had penetrated east and north (8)
10 Transport. Limo? No, a rickshaw in the front broken down (8)
11 Daughter sitting near fireplace at valley (6)
12 Say, SKY broadcast time (8)
13 Maintain a stretch in the heart of England East (6)
14 Two men taking test after first person's wrong (7)
17 After perfect instructions initially, managed to regularly heat fish (7)
20 Withdraw soldiers; everyone after beginning of clash (6)
22 Terrible guilt dumping girl friend at the end (8)
25 Heartlessly at first called aged lady heartless (6)
26 Hurry, show ending early, check with the English (8)
27 Identical females dancing behind square (8)
28 Starts to jump a position and get pieces of garments (6)

Down

1 Blocked path distributing mobile sim giving one (8)
2 Horrible cricket match with ball against America (6)
3 Layers of roads one put tar (mostly) on (6)
4 Boy takes girl's coin to become construction worker (7)
5 A shoot at hotel using artificial intelligence to cover Belgium's capital (3,5)
6 Plant orders login to enter Musk's (chief) group (8)
7 Teja's leg is hurting, lacking energy, feeling tired after travel (3,3)
15 Working with old females sometimes (2,3,3)
16 Back street in valley, wayfarer trapped (8)
18 South females, two to begin with composed and good looking (3,5)
19 In bed, European guy got startled and gave an astonished look (3-4)
21 Hugs & kisses in European Commission, alien facing a missile (6)
23 Office worker is tipsy, drunk with some tequila (6)
24 Mean press at north (6)

SUDOKU

			5				3	
	7	6					4	
2			9				6	8
				5		4	1	2
7	6	4		8				
9	8				1			6
	4					8	9	
	2				3			

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

A	T	L	A	S	E	S	■	C	O	C	O	N	U	T
R	■	O	■	C	■	H	■	I	■	L	■	E	■	R
R	E	C	O	R	D	I	N	G	■	A	N	G	L	E
I	■	A	■	E	■	V	■	A	■	S	■	L	■	A
V	I	L	L	A	G	E	■	R	E	S	P	E	C	T
A	■	■	■	M	■	R	■	■	■	I	■	C	■	E
L	O	C	K	S	■	I	N	D	I	C	A	T	E	D
■	■	O	■	■	■	N	■	E	■	■	■	E	■	■
L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	S	■	R	I	D	E	R
E	■	S	■	N	■	■	■	I	■	A	■	■	■	E
A	N	I	M	A	L	S	■	R	E	T	I	R	E	S
D	■	S	■	W	■	I	■	A	■	T	■	A	■	I
E	X	T	R	A	■	L	A	B	E	L	L	I	N	G
R	■	E	■	R	■	K	■	L	■	E	■	S	■	N
S	A	D	N	E	S	S	■	E	N	D	L	E	S	S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	3	5	1	8	7	2	4	6
1	8	7	2	6	4	5	3	9
4	2	6	3	5	9	1	8	7
8	7	9	5	4	6	3	2	1
2	4	1	7	3	8	6	9	5
6	5	3	9	1	2	4	7	8
3	9	2	6	7	5	8	1	4
7	6	4	8	2	1	9	5	3
5	1	8	4	9	3	7	6	2

FAITH

The journey of the soul

Why and what for are we born? Our deeds in the past had driven us to take this birth. It should be taken as an opportunity to wipe out all our sins and attain moksha. The meaning of the term soul called Aatma is "to attain", of course salvation. Both good and bad deeds are obstructing our aim of reaching the never returning and ever enjoying divine bliss in the heavenly abode. But it is vastly proclaimed in scriptures that a person should throughout his life undertake good deeds as much as he can which bring welfare to the society as a whole. How can we do then? Elders say we have to undertake the good ones not for our satisfaction or benefit, but for the sake of God saying it as "Krishnarpanam" through which the benefit accrues to God and He is pleased. When we start indulging in any misdeed, we are prompted by the God residing in the heart of every person through a kind of intuition.

There are three ways of nullifying the effect of both good and bad deeds to reach the heavenly abode – Enjoying the comforts and or undergoing pains and pangs; Resorting to corrective remedial measures called prayaschitham; and absolute surrender to God.

The journey of the soul is in two ways. First is called white path or archiradhi margam – travelling twelve lokas and going beyond crossing the Viraja river and reaching Srivaikunta. The second is known as black path or dhumramargam – can travel maximum up to twelve lokas but will be destined to return back again. The first one is for those who have nullified and for others the second. No criss-crossing between the two allowed, Velukudi Sri Krishnan Swami said in a discourse.

MONEYWISE

ASKUS

Vidya Bala

Q My son is an NRI. He desires to invest about ₹50,000 per month through his overseas bank in foreign currency. His aim is to ensure capital security, growth. ie risk-free capital appreciation. Please advise on investment opportunities in India, more desirably in Systematic Investment Plans.
V.N. VASUDEVAN

A There are multiple levels of complexity in what you have asked. First, investing in Indian investment products, directly from an overseas bank account, in foreign currency, is fraught with complications and may often not even be allowed in many financial products, barring banks and a few others like insurance products. If his plan is to eventually return to India and he is investing for such a purpose, it is best that he has an NRE account here locally, transfer funds into it and then use it to invest in India.
If he plans to stay abroad and does not wish to convert his savings into rupee, then there are two options: one is to invest in FCNR deposits in India and repatriate the same on maturity. This will offer fixed return and a high degree (not 100%) of safety; two, invest in overseas funds (there) that in turn invest in India. That means he will be investing in funds with origin in his country of residence in funds that invest offshore (In India). This is a better way to ensure he invests with his overseas bank account.
Second, if he is open to transferring funds in India and investing through an NRE account, then he can invest in either NRE deposits or choose to invest in debt mutual funds or equity mutual funds in India depending on his risk profile.
Third, depending on which country he is in, there might be restrictions on what he can invest in. For example, if he is in U.S./Canada, many mutual funds are not available for such non-residents but they can invest directly in stock markets. If he plans to invest in India, our suggestion is to get a fee-based financial adviser and explore the options as well as tax implications.

Q My wife (59) and I (67) are both retired. Our terminal benefits and savings together to the tune of ₹1.50 crore are invested in the following manner: bank FDs – 38%; Sr. Citizens Saving Scheme – 20%; Mutual – 21%; equities – 14%; NBFC/company deposits – 7%
Existing mutual fund investments are accumulated through SIPs over a period of 7 years when we were in service; we stopped the SIPs 8 years ago.
Since bank FDs (₹57 lakh) fetch lower returns, we are thinking of reducing those and shifting ₹25 lakh from this to other investments viz. company deposits or mutual funds. Please advise as to how much we can shift from there and reinvest in MFs or deposits.
KM PILLAI

A Instead of moving from bank FDs to a higher risk option, if you are okay with having payouts, then consider gilts and State development loans. These are government bonds offered on the RBI Direct Retail platform as auctions. It is currently a good time to enter into such bonds with tenures of 5 years to 10 years as yields range from 7.3% to 7.6% presently. These bonds will pay out half yearly interest and are the best options today with sovereign guarantee, outside of Senior Citizens' Scheme. Such yields may go down soon. You can invest by opening a free account on the platform https://rbiretaildirect.org.in/#/
These bonds can be sold before maturity but it is best that you hold them till maturity to avoid mis-timing the market. Also, liquidity in the secondary market may not be high for all the government bonds.
If you do not want interest payouts or want more tax efficient options then consider target maturity funds with a 4-5 year maturity date.
These can be sold whenever you wish to, but to avoid price volatility it is best that you hold them till maturity. Their yields are presently at 7.3-7.5% but can go down soon as interest rates are softening.
(The writer is Co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

The 'Lollapalooza Effect' on Meta stock

When such a well-discovered stock with core fundamentals falls 70-75% in 15 months, we need to discover why, in order to reduce the impact of any such wealth destruction on our investments

RISE AND FALL

G.R. Balaji

The term 'Lollapalooza Effect' means a confluence of factors acting together that can lead to either large positive or negative results.

The key is that when forces combine, they don't just add up; each force builds off and strengthens the other, creating an explosive effect with huge results, according to Charlie Munger, an American investor.

We should always learn as much as possible from a market or stock correction to build robust defence mechanisms. It will help in constructing a portfolio keeping in mind the various business possibilities. Currently, we are seeing a big carnage in one of the popular FAANG stock during this year – META.

Meta is a tech company which has a proven business model in digital advertising. It has brands like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, which are used by about 3.7 billion people on a monthly basis.

Meta has built a reputation over the last decade as one of the safest investment choices by scaling revenues from $5 billion to more than $100 billion, and delivering 40% and above PAT growth. It also joined the $1-trillion club and the coveted FAANG club – a set of 5 dominant stocks, forming part of core holding for investors across the globe.

When such a well-discovered stock with stable core fundamentals falls 70-75% (close to $700-billion decline) in a matter of 15 months, it is worth understanding the forces behind it so that we can reduce the impact of such wealth destruction on our investments. Post this fall, the stock's 10-year CAGR return was lower than the broader market return.

The factors which potentially led to a sharp fall in business and stock price are discussed below:

During the last decade, Meta grew its revenue in the range of 30-40% per annum on an average due to the high growth in digital advertising.

Value migration
In 2021, digital advertisements hit 65-70% of the total advertising market. Value migration from existing segments to the new segment (digital) started hitting saturation levels. Now, online market growth is expected to resemble aggregate advertisement growth across the world, which is growing in low, single digit.

Since digital advertisement is a lucrative business given the high growth and high margins for established players, a lot of competition has come up in the last few years. The rise of TikTok was the first sign of a strong competitor for Meta which threatened its core business.

Declining utility
Meta's clientele includes corporations that use Meta's platform to make targeted advertisements. This was possible with the data Meta captured when its platform was used. Recently, Apple had changed the ecosystem policy in terms of sharing of data and it in the business had gone up significantly.

> When stocks are priced for perfection with low margin of safety in terms of valuations, even the finest blue-chip is punished brutally

COVID 'boon'
The pandemic turned out to be a boon for Meta in two ways. One, online commerce became mainstream, and everyone started using online advertisements to reach out to customers.

Two, the demand for products was significantly higher than demand for services due to lockdowns. Both these factors boosted sales and the profit margin for Meta.

Return to normalcy from the pandemic resulted in tailwinds turning headwinds.

Cost of capital
As we are coming to the end of a quantitative easing era, the cost of capital is going up across the world. So share firms that are still in the investing phase are priced lower. We have seen this impact even in stocks like Tesla and Amazon.

Macro headwinds
Advertisement is a discretionary expense. With a slowing economy, investors have realised that the digital advertisement market is also affected during an economic slowdown since a large section of the advertisement market has already moved online.

Key takeaways
As investors, we need to understand what quantum of growth and profitability is priced into a stock. When stocks are priced for perfection with low margin of safety in terms of valuations, even the finest blue-chip is punished brutally when an adverse change occurs in fundamentals.

Avoiding a highly-valued, well-discovered stock is a better approach to protect us from a debacle such as Meta.

To achieve good investing outcomes in the long term, we need to ensure that we have an adequate margin of safety in terms of business quality and cheaper valuation, even as buying would help us avoid lengthy periods of underperformance or sharper drawdowns.

(The writer is Head of Research and Co-Fund Manager, ithought PMS)

Triple whammy

COVERNOTE

GST on the profit from sale of a used vehicle to a salvage buyer had to be paid, cutting into the insurance claim value received by the seller, who was a GST-registered consultant in this case

K. Nitya Kalyani

In the previous instalment of Cover Note, we saw a brief profile of a constructive total loss claim for a sport utility vehicle (SUV).

The SUV was submerged and needed repairs costlier than its insurance value and so, the insurer opted to settle the claim at the Insured Declared Value (IDV). Traditionally, the insurer would pay the IDV to the insured, take over the salvage, and dispose it of in one of their periodic auctions.

Nowadays, some insurers pick the best quote from qualified salvage buyers and make a composite claim offer to the insured by making up the difference to total to the IDV. Apparently, the practice is in order to avoid taking over the title of the vehicle because that purchase and subsequent sale gets on to the books of the company.

In this matter, the insured was faced with a new problem. He was a GST-registered consultant and was liable for GST on the profit on sale of the vehicle to the salvage buyer.

Being a used vehicle, its written down value was zero; hence GST would have to be paid on the full sale value, cutting into the insurance claim value he received. In contrast, any insurance claim is free of income tax as it is compensation and not income. So, he felt that GST should not impact him either.

'No precedent'
When he brought this to the knowledge of the insurance company, they expressed helplessness as the purchase and sale of the vehicle would both be 'GST-able' transactions and they did not have a precedent or methodology for this.

Meanwhile, the procedure for transferring the vehicle presented a different challenge.

When we sell a vehicle, we sign the Road Transport Authority forms for transfer, forms 29 and 30, and the buyer has 30 days to transfer the title to himself. In practice, buyers request that the forms not be dated and that even buyer details not be filled in Form 30, the transfer form.

'Delayed registration, a problem'
They claim that this enables them to get more lead time to get the registration done. However, it also enables them to use the vehicle in the seller's name and, eventually, sell it to somebody else.

I have known cases where this continues for years! Their reasoning is that registration charges are avoided and the fewer the owners on the RC the better the vehicle's resale value. However, this comes at the cost of the seller.

How so? We will see this in the next instalment of Cover Note.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.10	7.75	7.20
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.65	6.65	6.50
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.75	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	5.50	5.75	5.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.75	7.00	7.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	9.01	7.00	7.25	9.01
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.50	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.00	6.75	7.00	7.00
Bandhan Bank	7.50	7.00	7.00	5.60
CSB Bank	7.50	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.25	6.25	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	7.50	6.75	7.50	7.25
HDFC Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	6.60	6.10	6.50	6.60
IDFC First Bank	7.25	6.50	6.50	6.50
IndusInd Bank	7.25	6.75	6.75	6.75
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.25
Karnataka Bank	7.20	6.80	5.75	5.75
Karur Vysya Bank	7.25	6.50	7.00	6.25
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.00	6.75	6.30	6.20
Nainital Bank	6.80	5.75	5.60	5.75
RBL Bank	7.55	7.00	6.55	6.55
Tamilnad Mercantile	6.50	6.30	6.00	6.00
South Indian Bank	7.00	6.50	5.90	6.00
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	6.75	6.10	6.25	6.10
Bank of India	7.25	5.75	6.25	5.75
Bank of Maharashtra	6.30	6.15	6.00	5.75
Canara Bank	7.00	6.25	6.50	6.50
Indian Bank	6.50	6.10	6.40	6.40
Indian Overseas Bank	6.55	6.40	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.00	6.30	6.25	6.10
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.00	6.10	6.10	6.10
State Bank of India	6.75	6.75	6.25	6.25
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.30	7.30	6.70
Foreign Banks				
Citibank	7.25	7.25	3.50	3.50
Deutsche Bank	7.25	6.50	7.00	7.00
HSBC Bank	7.00	3.10	7.00	6.00

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Source:Paisabazaar.com			
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.75-9.50	8.75-9.40	8.75-9.40
Bank of Baroda	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.60
Union Bank of India	8.60-10.50	8.60-10.70	8.60-10.70
Punjab National Bank	8.60 - 9.35	8.55 - 9.25	8.55 - 9.25
Bank of India	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.60
Canara Bank	8.55-13.35	8.55-13.35	8.55-13.35
UCO Bank	8.75-8.95	8.75-8.95	8.75-8.95
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35 onwards	8.35 onwards	8.35 onwards
Indian Overseas Bank	9.30-10.70	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards
ICICI Bank	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85
Axis Bank	8.60-12.70	8.60-12.70	8.60-9.05
HSBC Bank	8.35-9.20	8.35-9.20	8.35-9.20
South Indian Bank	9.25-12.00	9.25-12.00	9.25-12.00
Karur Vysya Bank	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85
Karnataka Bank	8.67-9.99	8.67-9.99	8.67-9.99
Federal Bank	9.90-9.95	9.95-10.00	10.00-10.05
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.00-10.15	9.00-10.15	9.00-10.15
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.75-9.25	8.75-9.25	8.75-9.25
Bandhan Bank	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00
RBL Bank	11.30-13.00	9.70-10.10	9.70-10.00
CSB Bank	9.69	9.69	9.94
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.30-10.00	8.30-10.20	8.30-10.40
HDFC Ltd.	8.20-10.00	8.20-10.25	8.20-10.35
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.30 onwards	8.30 onwards	8.30 onwards
Tata Capital	>=8.60	>=8.60	>=8.60
PNB Housing Finance	8.75-13.00	8.75-13.00	8.85-12.20
GIC Housing Finance	>=8.10	>=8.10	>=8.10
Repco Home Finance	>=9.00	>=9.00	>=9.00
Indiabulls Housing	>=8.95	>=8.95	>=8.95
Aditya Birla Capital	8.50-13.50	8.50-13.50	8.50-13.50
ICICI Home Finance	>=9.20	>=9.20	>=9.20
Godrej Housing Finance	8.39-10.99	8.39-10.99	8.39-10.99
Home First Finance	8.00-22.00	8.00-22.00	8.00-22.00

Rates as on December 15 Source: www.paisabazaar.com

TUNIS

Tunisia Opposition calls for Saied to quit after voters shun election

AP

Tunisia plunged into political uncertainty on Sunday as its main Opposition alliance called on President Kais Saied to "leave immediately", a day after voters overwhelmingly snubbed elections for a neutered parliament. The electoral board said only 8.8% of the 9-million-strong electorate had turned out for Saturday's polls. AFP

SUVA

Fiji election ends in cliffhanger, Opposition eyes deal for power

AFP

Fiji's election ended in a cliffhanger on Sunday, with two rival ex-coup leaders failing to win a majority and needing the backing of a minor party to secure power. Incumbent PM Frank Bainimarama's Fiji First party and an Opposition coalition led by Sitiveni Rabuka were both projected to secure 26 seats in the 55-seat legislature. AFP

KABUL

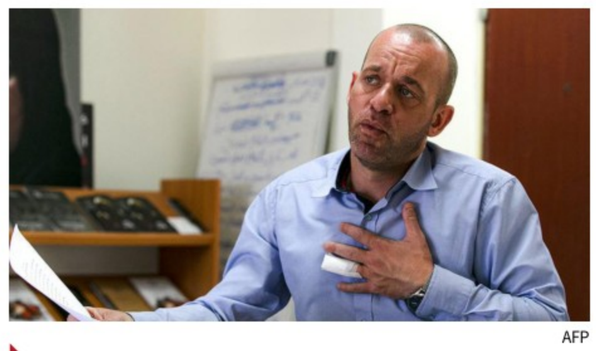
Fuel tanker blast in a tunnel kills at least 19 persons in Afghanistan

AFP

At least 19 persons were killed and 32 injured when a fuel tanker exploded in a tunnel north of the Afghan capital Kabul. It was not immediately clear what caused the incident, which happened at around 8.30 p.m. An official said survivors remain trapped under rubble and that the number of casualties could rise. AP

FRANCE

France slams Israel's expulsion of French-Palestinian lawyer



AFP

French-Palestinian human rights lawyer Salah Hamouri, held without charge in Israeli prisons since March, arrived in Paris on Sunday following his expulsion from Israel condemned by Paris. An Israeli military court accused him of being a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and cited security threats. AFP

In fresh attack, Russia troops target heart of Kherson city

Russian officials say Ukraine's shelling of Belgorod region killed one person and injured eight. Ukraine President uses World Cup final to decry war, hours before the Argentina-France tie

Associated Press
KYIV

Russian military forces on Sunday shelled the centre of Kherson, the major city that Russian soldiers retreated from last month in one of Moscow's biggest battlefield setbacks in Ukraine.

Three persons were wounded in the attacks, said presidential deputy chief of staff Kyrylo Tymoshenko.

The southern city and its surrounding region have come under frequent attacks since the Russian pullback. Regional Governor Yaroslav Yanushevych said on Sunday that Russia had carried out 54 attacks with rocket, mortar, and tank fire over the previous day, killing three persons.

New beginning: A family reunites for the first time since Russian troops withdrew from the Kherson region in November. AP

Meanwhile, in Russia, the governor of the Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said on Sunday that one person was killed and eight wounded in Ukrainian shelling of the region, which lies along Ukraine's northern border.

In the latest phase of the war that Russia began nearly 10 months ago, Moscow's forces have been heavily targeting infrastructure serving civilians, such as water and electricity supply lines, compounding Ukrainians' suffering as winter sets in.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used the final of the soccer World Cup to decry war.

"This World Cup proved time and again that different countries and different nationalities can decide who is the strongest in fair play but not in the playing with fire – on the green playing field, not on the red battlefield," Mr. Zelensky said in an English video statement released hours before the final in Qatar between Argentina and France.

In Russia, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu inspected troops involved in what Moscow calls its special military operation in Ukraine on Sunday.

Mr. Shoigu "made a working trip to the Southern Military District", the Defence Ministry said.

It added that Mr. Shoigu spoke with servicemen "on the frontline" and listened to reports from military officials at a "command post".

(With AFP inputs)

Anti-abortion priest Pavone defrocked for blasphemous posts on social media

Associated Press
VATICAN CITY

The Vatican has defrocked an anti-abortion U.S. priest, Frank Pavone, for what it said were "blasphemous communications on social media" as well as "persistent disobedience" of his bishop.

A letter to U.S. bishops from the Vatican Ambassador to the U.S., Archbishop Christophe Pierre, obtained on Sunday, said the decision against Mr. Pavone, who heads the anti-abortion group Priests for Life, had been taken on November 9, and that there was no chance for an appeal.

Frank Pavone

Aborted fetus video

Mr. Pavone had been investigated by his then-diocese of Amarillo, Texas, for having placed an aborted foetus on an altar and posting a video of it on social media in 2016. He posts frequently about U.S. politics and abortion, and the video of the aborted foetus was accompanied by a post saying that Hillary Clinton and the Democratic platform would allow abortion to continue and that Donald Trump and the Republican platform want to protect unborn children.

Mr. Pavone remains a firm supporter of Mr. Trump: His Twitter handle features him wearing a "MAGA" hat with a background photo featuring the former U.S. President, whom many conservatives praise for his Supreme Court nominees who overturned the landmark decision guaranteeing a constitutional right to abortion.

In a tweet on Sunday, Mr. Pavone sounded defiant, comparing his fate to that of the unborn.

"So in every profession, including the priesthood, if you defend the #unborn, you will be treated like them! The only difference is that when we are "aborted," we continue to speak, loud and clear."

His supporters immediately denounced the measure, including the bishop of Tyler, Texas, Joseph Strickland, who referred to U.S. President Joe Biden's support for abortion rights as "evil."

EU strikes deal to reform bloc's carbon market

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

EU member States and parliamentarians on Sunday announced an agreement for a major reform to the bloc's carbon market.

The deal aims to accelerate emissions cuts, phase out free allowances to industries and targets fuel emissions from the building and road transport sectors.

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) allows electricity producers and industries with high energy demands such as steel and cement to purchase "free allowances" to cover carbon emissions under a "polluter pays" principle.

The deal means emissions in the ETS sectors are to be cut by 62% by 2030 based on 2005 levels, up from a previous goal of 43%. Concerned industries must cut their emissions by that amount.

At least nine Iraqi police officers killed in bomb blast near Kirkuk

Reuters
KIRKUK

At least nine Iraqi federal policemen were killed on Sunday after a bomb struck their convoy southwest of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, two security sources told Reuters. The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The blast took place near the village of Safra, which lies about 30 km southwest of Kirkuk, said the source, adding that two other policemen were critically wounded.

'Hunt for terrorists'

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has ordered a hunt for the "terrorist elements" who carried out the attack.

Iraq had declared victory over the terrorist group, which once held large swathes of the country, in December 2017.

Iraqi police officers cited Islamic State militants' involvement in the attack saying they used roadside bombs to target the police force which was patrolling the area.

Despite the defeat of the Islamic State militant group in 2017, remnants of the group switched to hit-and-run attacks against government forces in different parts of Iraq.

Taliban seize police station in Pakistan

Press Trust of India
PESHAWAR

The Taliban militants on Sunday seized a counter-terrorism centre and took hostages in Bannu district of Pakistan's troubled Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the police said.

There is a hostage situation ongoing at the Counter-terrorism Department installation at Bannu Cantonment, an official said.

The militants infiltrated into the Cantonment and freed imprisoned wanted terrorists, the police said.

They subsequently took control of a section of the compound, holding CTD security personnel hostage, the police added.

The Pakistan Army troops were immediately dispatched to the area, which had been sealed. Local residents have been asked to remain indoors.

Seoul's military claims North Korea fired two ballistic missiles

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

North Korea fired two medium-range ballistic missiles on Sunday, Seoul's military said, days after Pyongyang announced a successful test of a solid-fuel motor for a new weapons system.

Military tensions on the Korean peninsula have risen sharply this year as Pyongyang has carried out an unprecedented blitz of weapons tests, including the launch of its most advanced intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) ever last month.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected two medium-range ballistic missiles that had been fired from the Tongchangri area in North Pyongan province.

The missiles were fired from 11:13 am (0743 IMT) to 12:05 pm into the East Sea, it said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

They were fired on a "lofted" trajectory and flew around 500 km, JCS said in a statement, adding South Korean and U.S. intelligence officials were analysing the launch "in consideration of recent trends related to North Korea's missile development".

Sport

Cummins' five-for gives Australia victory inside two days

Agence France-Presse
BRISBANE

Australia captain Pat Cummins spearheaded a pace barrage that tore through South Africa before his side chased down a target of 34 runs on Sunday to claim a six-wicket win inside two days on a hostile Gabba pitch.

Cummins finished with five for 42 and Mitchell Starc took the 300th wicket of his Test career.

After finishing its first innings 66 runs in front midway through the first session, Australia dismissed the visitors for just 99.

Australia then lost four wickets in the chase as paceman Kagiso Rabada ran amok, with Usman Khawaja, David Warner, Steve Smith and Travis Head all falling caught behind. However, Marnus Labuschagne and Cameron Green – aided by 15 extras – guided Australia home for a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Speed Merchant: Cummins spearheaded a pace barrage that tore through South Africa. AFP

The scores: South Africa 152 & 99 in 37.4 overs (Temba Bavuma 29, Khaya Zondo 36 n.o.; Pat Cummins 5/42) lost to Australia 218 & 35/4 in 7.5 overs (Kagiso Rabada 4/13). **MoM:** Travis Head.

Tote favourite Salento delivers in the Golconda 2000 Guineas

RACING

HYDERABAD: Trainer Arjun Manglorkar's Salento, ridden by Antony Raj S, won the Golconda 2000 Guineas, the main attraction of Sunday's (Dec. 18) races.

The winner is owned by M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP, M/s. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, & Mr. Rajan Aggarwal.

The son of Speaking Of Which -and Peninsula, kept in the fifth position till the bend, moved with gigantic strides in the home straight to win the race from fast-finishing Kancha.

Trainer G. Shashikanth saddled three winners on the day.

1. NEXT MOVE PLATE (1,600m), rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **I AM SUPERMAN** (B. Nikhil) 1, My Way Or Highway (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Survivor (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 3 and Janasu (Mohit Singh) 4. Hd, 3 and Hd. 1m, 42.07s. ₹29 (w), 14, 13 and 13 (p). SHP: 27, THP: 40, SHW: 24 and 13, FP: 65, Q: 33, Tanala: 247. Favourite: My Way Or Highway. Owners: Mr. Subodh Kumar Ananthula & Mr. Sultan Singh. Trainer: Magan Singh.

2. STEP ASIDE PLATE (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only (Cat. II): **SIDDHARTH** (Ashad Asbar) 1, Reigning Beauty (Afroz Khan) 2, Rising Tycoon (Md. Ismail) 3 and N R I Skylab (Antony Raj) 4. 1-1/4, Nk and 3/4. 1m, 13.62s. ₹218 (w), 23, 24 and 11 (p). SHP: 141, THP: 50, SHW: 64 and 104, FP: 2,295, Q: 1,332, Tanala: 14,200. Favourite: Rising Tycoon.

Owner: Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

Rewarding a champion: Salento's owner Rajendran, left, receiving the winner's trophy from HRC chairman R. Surender Reddy in the presence of HRC steward P.S. Reddy.G. RAMAKRISHNA

3. VIKARABAD CUP (DIV. II) (1,100m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **GARNET** (Sonu Kumar) 1, Nucleus (Mohit Singh) 2, Coming Home (D.S. Deora) 3 and Divine Connection (R.S. Jodha) 4. 3-1/2, Nk and 1-1/4. 1m, 6.21s. ₹20 (w), 12, 19 and 21 (p). SHP: 74, THP: 66, SHW: 17 and 69, FP: 106, Q: 90, Tanala: 1,391. Favourite: Garnet. Owners: Mr. Prakash Babu & Mr. Suresh Cintamaneni. Trainer: D. Netto.

4. 1 EME CENTRE ROLLING TROPHY (1,800m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **NIGHTMARE** (Sonu Kumar) 1, Hoping Cloud (Mohit Singh) 2, Just Incredible (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Despang (Surya Prakash) 4. Nose, 1/2 and 2. 1m, 52.59s. ₹247 (w), 26, 14 and 10 (p). SHP: 32, THP: 45, SHW: 129 and 14, FP: 864, Q: 153, Tanala: 3,507. Favourite: Hoping Cloud. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

5. SANGAM PLATE (1,400m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **ACROBAT** (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Ivanhoe (Surya Prakash) 2, Role Model (Gaurav Singh) 3 and Swiss Girl (B. Nikhil) 4. 3-3/4, 3/4 and Hd. 1m, 25.92s. ₹26 (w), 15, 21 and 17 (p). SHP: 42, THP: 62, SHW: 18 and 41, FP: 181, Q: 105, Tanala: 1,223. Favourite: Clefairy. Owner: Mr. M. Satyanarayana. Trainer: L.V.R. Deshmukh.

6. VIKARABAD CUP (DIV. I) (1,100m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **VISION OF ROSE** (B.R. Kumar) 1, Cabello (Ajay Kumar) 2, Above The Law (Md. Ismail) 3 and Different (B. Nikhil) 4. 1-1/4, 1/2 and Nk. 1m, 6.11s. ₹21 (w), 13, 18 and 14 (p). SHP: 82, THP: 44, SHW: 11 and 40, FP: 213, Q: 87, Tanala: 387. Favourite: Vision Of Rose. Owner: Mr. Maddali Sai Kumar. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

7. GOLCONDA 2000 GUINEAS (GR. 2) (1,600M) (TERMS), 3-Y-O ONLY: SALENTO (SPEAKING OF WHICH-PENINSULA) (ANTONY RAJ S) 1, Kancha (Planetaire-Courtship) (Akshay Kumar) 2, Dyf (Cougar Mountain-Soak) (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and Arthur (Kingda Ka-Godspeed) (Yash Narredu) 4. 3/4, 1/2 and Neck 1m, 37.65s. ₹22 (w), 12, 24 and 14 (p). SHP: 71, THP: 53, SHW: 10 and 50, FP: 151, Q: 144, Tanala: 333. Favourite: Salento. Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP, M/s. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta & Mr. Rajan Aggarwal. Trainer: Arjun Manglorkar.

8. VIKARABAD CUP (DIV. III) (1,100m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **SILK** (Antony Raj S) 1, Malibu (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Bellaque (B. Nikhil) 3 and Lights On (R.S. Jodha) 4. Nk, 1-1/4 and 1-1/4. 1m, 6.85s. ₹38 (w), 14, 14 and 11 (p). SHP: 44, THP: 63, SHW: 15 and 22, FP: 165, Q: 87, Tanala: 306. Favourite: Bellaque. Owner: Mr. Maddali Sai Kumar. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

Jackpot: 70%: ₹38, 214 (6 tkts.) & 30%: 6,551 (15 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 2,950 (15 tkts.), (ii) 27,421 (1 tkt.), (iii) 258 (183 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 41,997 (c/f), (ii) 858 (105 tkts.).

Fulfilling a dream: Messi and Argentina came up trumps in a battle for the ages to lay their hands on the FIFA World Cup Trophy. GETTY IMAGES

Roster of champions

1930	Uruguay
1934	Italy
1938	Italy
1950	Uruguay
1954	West Germany
1958	Brazil
1962	Brazil
1966	England
1970	Brazil
1974	West Germany
1978	Argentina
1982	Italy
1986	Argentina
1990	West Germany
1994	Brazil
1998	France
2002	Brazil
2006	Italy
2010	Spain
2014	Germany
2018	France
2022	**Argentina**

Lionel Messi's Argentina keeps its date with destiny

Mbappe's hat-trick keeps France in with a chance in an epic finale, but *La Albiceleste* are not to be denied as Martinez is once again the hero under the bar in the shootout

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

This surely was the last chance. Lionel Messi at 35 had been on a mission, compelling his ageing legs to produce moments of balletic grace to sprinkle some of his stardust on this World Cup. Here again the stands were blue-and-white, his followers waiting in anticipation for the glory that Messi and the world have yearned for from June 16, 2006, when he made his World Cup debut against Serbia and Montenegro.

And 6029 days, 120 gruelling minutes and a shootout later, the agony was finally over as Argentina trumped France to make it a momentous, beautiful night at the Lusail Stadium.

Early in the final Messi chased and harassed Theo Hernandez from the right flank to the centre circle, showing the opponents and his team that he was not shying away from any fight. It almost looked like he would be left with more pain, a career without the final touch of perfection.

But he and his Argentina hung on, refusing to be beaten every time the French and its resplendent star Kylian Mbappe threatened to gate-crash their party.

When Angel Di Maria ran past Ousmane Dembele inside the box, the push from the French winger was light but illegal enough for the Argentine to tumble down and for Polish referee Szymon Marciniak to award a penalty. Messi paused for Hugo Lloris to commit to his right, and the French skipper, in mid-dive, watched in anguish as the ball sailed past.

Transitions the key

Transitions had been France's key to unlocking opponents earlier, but here Messi played the ball to Julian Alvarez on his right, who sent Alex Mac Allister on a dash behind enemy lines, with Aurelien Tchouameni and Jules Kounde chasing like out-of-shape cops running after teenage punks.

And when Di Maria was found on the left of the box the result looked ominous as France had no one to track back. Lloris rushed out but Di Maria was too experienced to be troubled by that and lifted it over the French skipper.

But just when you thought there would be no late drama, Nicolas Otamendi pushed Kolo Muani Randal down when he was no match for the pace of the younger man.

Mbappe converted despite Emiliano Martinez jumping the right way, and the France striker, the star of the show in Russia four years ago, soon got the French president Emmanuel Macron on his feet when he equalised with a powerful shot to the bottom-right.

Argentina had lost a similar lead in the 1986 final against West Germany, and the triumph came only when Diego Maradona escaped his markers to play the decisive pass to Jorge Burruchaga in the 84th minute.

Messi thought he finally had the Cup in his grasp when he was there to tap in Argentina's third after Lloris had sharply saved the first shot from Lautaro Martinez. Hernandez's attempted clearance came after the ball had crossed the line and VAR confirmed the same.

But it was not the end yet. Mbappe converted a penalty with minutes left after Gonzalo Montiel was adjudged to have handled the ball.

Martinez rushed out to thwart Kolo Muani in the dying seconds with a miraculous block to take it to penalties, and there he continued his heroics and blocked France's second shot from Kinsley Coman after Mbappe had converted his third penalty of the night. Messi looked lost in his thoughts as he walked to the box, but he caressed his shot in, not feeling the pressure that was coursing through all of us.

Martinez dived to his right to stop Coman and jumped for joy. Paolo Dybala, too, converted with aplomb, hitting it through the middle after Lloris had picked the left side to dive.

When Tchouameni's effort harmlessly sailed wide, Martinez was jiving. Leandro Paredes blasted in the next and ran to the 'keeper.

The celebrations were on. Though Kolo Muani converted for France, Montiel scored, and pandemonium engulfed the night.

The result (final): Argentina 3 (Messi 23-pen & 108, Di Maria 36) drew with France 3 (Mbappe 80-pen, 81 & 118-pen) till extra-time.

The penalty shootout:

Mbappe scores, Messi equalises
Coman misses, Dybala strikes
Tchouameni off target, Paredes scores
Muani gets past Martinez, Montiel seals it.
Argentina wins 4-2 to clinch the World Cup.

The numbers game

- Messi is the first player to win the Golden Ball twice — in 2014 and 2022
- Messi also is the first to score in the group stage, round of 16, quarterfinal, semifinal, and final of a single edition
- Argentina became the first South American nation to win the World Cup since Brazil in 2002
- Mbappe is only the second to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final after England's Geoff Hurst in 1966
- France lost in the final of a World Cup for the second time and incidentally, on penalties on both occasions (2006 vs Italy & 2022 vs Argentina)

Mbappe

Messi salutes fans; We were made to suffer, says goalkeeper Martinez

Agencies
DOHA

Argentina was made to suffer before landing its first World Cup title in 36 years. And Lionel Messi saluted the Argentina fans in Lusail Stadium on Sunday after helping inspire his country to its first World Cup victory in 36 years.

"We're champions of the world!" exclaimed Messi on the stadium microphone after his two goals and successful shootout spot-kick helped Argentina to the title.

Messi hugged his family members and team-mates after the stunning match.

Off we go: Argentina nailed its penalties in the shootout in emphatic manner, led by Messi's cheeky opener, followed by clean hits from Dybala, Paredes and Montiel. GETTY IMAGES, REUTERS

"It was a game where we suffered," said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, who saved one penalty in the shootout on Sunday but had also saved two more spot kicks in its quarterfinal against Netherlands.

"Two crappy shots and they (France) levelled. They give them another penalty, they scored. Thank God later I did my thing, what I dreamed of.

"There could not have been a World Cup that I have dreamed of like this. I was calm during the penalties," Martinez said.

For Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni it was a nail-biting finish to a turbulent tournament and he could not hold back his tears following the final whistle.

"I cannot believe that we have suffered so much in a perfect game. Unbelievable, but this team responds to everything," Scaloni said.

"I am proud of the work they did. It is an exciting group. With the blows we received today, with the draws, this makes you emotional. I want to tell people to enjoy, it's a historic moment for our country."

It was the third world title for Argentina and the first since the late Diego Maradona won the trophy almost single-handedly in 1986.

For Argentina players and captain Messi it was the biggest title of their careers.

Messi's Argentine team had made the final as recently as 2014 but on that occasion it finished second best to Germany.

"I'll never forget it. We had to suffer but we deserved to win" said Argentina defender Rodrigo De Paul. "We've beaten the last champions, it's a joy I cannot put into words. I'm proud of being born in Argentina and today we are on top of the world."

REWARDING EXCELLENCE

Lionel Messi wins his second Golden Ball for best player

Lionel Messi on Sunday won the Golden Ball for the best player after leading Argentina to glory on Sunday. The Argentine maestro is the first to win the coveted award twice after being chosen for the honour in 2014 also. Kylian Mbappe finished second to Messi ahead of Luka Modric, who helped Croatia finish third.

SAFE HANDS

Argentina's Martinez rewarded with the Golden Glove

Argentina's Emiliano Martinez took the Golden Glove for the World Cup's best goalkeeper after his consistently good show in the tournament. Martinez rose to the occasion on Sunday by going the right way to block the effort from France's Kingsley Coman during the shoot-out.

TALENTED DUO

Mbappe bags the Golden Boot, Fernandez is best young player

French forward Kylian Mbappe, who scored eight goals, including a hat-trick in the final on Sunday, was awarded the Golden Boot for being the top scorer in the World Cup. Argentina's Enzo Fernandez took the Young Player award for best under-21 player of the tournament

STARRY NIGHT

Deepika and Casillas showcase the FIFA World Cup Trophy

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone, accompanied by Spanish goalkeeping legend and World Cup-winning skipper Iker Casillas, showcased the FIFA World Cup trophy before the final at the Lusail Stadium on Sunday. The trophy arrived at the venue in a specially made trunk commissioned by Louis Vuitton.

INBRIEF

Brook's century drives England to slender lead

Harry Brook scored his third century in as many matches while Ben Foakes hit a half-century as England took a lead of 29 against Pakistan at the end of day two of the final Test of the series at National Stadium in Karachi on Sunday. Brook made 111 to continue his excellent start to with the 23-year-old proving to be the glue in England's innings, putting on partnerships with Ollie Pope and captain Ben Stokes before a stand of 117 with Foakes.

The scores: Pakistan 304 & 21/0 in 9 overs vs England 354 in 81.4 overs (Harry Brook 111, Ben Foakes 64, Abrar Ahmed 4/150, Nauman Ali 4/126).

Martyn Pawelski beats Sasikumar Mukund for title

Martyn Pawelski of Poland beat top seed Sasikumar Mukund 6-2, 6-4 in the final of the $15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on Sunday.

The results: $15,000 ITF men, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Final: Martyn Pawelski (Pol) bt Sasikumar Mukund 6-2, 6-4.

Barsoton and Jisa emerge winners with record timings

Holder Leonard Barsoton and previous edition's silver medallist Desi Jisa rewrote course records to win golds in elite international men and women's categories of the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K race in Kolkata on Sunday.

The results: International: Men: 1. Leonard Barsoton (Ken) 1:12:49; 2. Birhanu Legese (Eth) 1:12:54; 3. Victor Kiplangat (Uga) 1:12:56. **Women:** 1. Desi Jisa (Bah) 1:21:04; 2. Zeineba Yimer (Eth) 1:21:18; 3. Mercyline Chelangat (Uga) 1:21:31.

Indian: Men: 1. Abhishek Pal 1:17:52; 2. Kalidas Hirave 1:17:57; 3. Srinu Bugatha 1:18:25. **Women:** 1. Sanjivani Jadhav 1:34:23; 2. Monika Choudhary 1:37:00; 3. Reenu Singh 1:39:11.

Parikrma FC wins BDFA 'A' division title

Parikrma FC defeated South United FC 2-1 in the final to claim the BDFA 'A' division football league title in Bengaluru.

The result, final: Parikrma 2 (Neil Joseph 35, 60) bt South United 1 (Bilal Shamshudeen 20).

LIVE TELECAST

Pakistan vs England: 3rd Test, day 3, Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.

World Tennis League: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Voot Select, 7.30 p.m.

ISL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m.

India demolishes Bangladesh, Shakib's cameo notwithstanding

The 188-run victory helps India leapfrog South Africa and take second spot, behind Australia, in the WTC race

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

N. Sudarshan
CHATTOGRAM

India made short work of the Bangladesh tail, removing the last four wickets for 52 runs in 11.2 overs, to record a thumping 188-run victory and take a 1-0 series lead, at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here on Sunday.

The win was important in India's quest to keep its World Test Championship dream alive. It is now second in the table behind Australia (with five more Tests remaining in this cycle), nosing ahead of South Africa which lost in Brisbane, also on Sunday, in under two days.

Task accomplished: Axar, right, and Kuldeep combined to put paid to Bangladesh's hopes. Captain Rahul and Pujara look on. AFP

Improbable task

Resuming on 272 for six and needing a further 241 runs for an improbable win, there was very little the last recognised Bangladesh batting pair of skipper Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan could do.

The two threw their bats around to collect a few consolatory embellishments. Mehidy drove Mohammed Siraj to the cover fence in the very first over of the day, but couldn't keep another steer down shortly afterwards and was caught at backward point.

Shakib, a restless batter even in the best of times and someone who gives off the vibes of a maverick cricketer amidst a bunch of modest triers, went after the bowling.

He launched Axar Patel over long-on for six to reach his half-century and then deposited the left-arm spinner over deep mid-wicket for another maximum. There were even flat-batted hits against the pacers that went down the ground for runs.

But Kuldeep Yadav soon foxed him. Shakib swept a full delivery to the square-leg boundary but a repeat attempt off a ball that was held back slightly, and thus shorter in length, ended in failure, rearranging his stumps. An entertaining 84 (108b, 6x4, 6x6), that helped the captain leave a small mark on a match that he had struggled to influence for four full days, had come to an end. It wasn't long before his team sank as well.

No excuses

"It was a good wicket to bat [on], but we didn't [bat well] in the first innings," Shakib lamented. "Playing Test cricket after five or six months isn't easy. But it cannot be an excuse. We cannot just bowl and bat well in one innings. We have to play well all five days.

"We identified our mistakes and tried to do well in the second innings. But a lot of credit should go to India. They bowled in partnerships and created pressure."

SCOREBOARD

INDIA — 1ST INNINGS
404 in 133.5 overs
BANGLADESH — 1ST INNINGS
150 in 55.5 overs
INDIA — 2ND INNINGS
258/2 decl. in 61.4 overs
BANGLADESH — 2ND INNINGS
Najmul Hossain c Pant b Umesh 67 *(156b, 7x4)*, Zakir Hasan c Kohli b Ashwin 100 *(224b, 13x4, 1x6)*, Yasir Ali b Axar 5 *(12b, 1x4)*, Litton Das c Umesh b Kuldeep 19 *(59b, 2x4)*, Mushfiqur Rahim b Axar 23 *(50b, 2x4)*, Shakib Al Hasan b Kuldeep 84 *(108b, 6x4, 6x6)*, Nurul Hasan st. Pant b Axar 3 *(3b)*, Mehidy Hasan c Umesh b Siraj 13 *(48b, 3x4)*, Taijul Islam b Axar 4 *(15b)*, Ebadot Hossain c Shreyas b Kuldeep 0 *(5b)*, Khaled Ahmed (not out) 0 *(1b)*; Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-1): 6; Total (in 113.2 overs): 324.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-124 (Najmul, 46.1 overs), 2-131 (Yasir, 49.6), 3-173 (Litton, 68.4), 4-208 (Zakir, 78.2), 5-234 (Mushfiqur, 87.1), 6-238 (Nurul, 87.6), 7-283 (Mehidy, 104.5), 8-320 (Shakib, 110.6), 9-324 (Ebadot, 112.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Siraj 19-4-67-1, Umesh 15-3-27-1, Ashwin 27-3-75-1, Axar 32.2-10-77-4, Kuldeep 20-3-73-3.

Man-of-the-Match: Kuldeep.

India won by 188 runs, leads two-match series 1-0.

Second Test: December 22-26, Mirpur, 9 a.m. IST.

A satisfying and sweet first victory for captain Rahul

N. Sudarshan
CHATTOGRAM

It was a sweet first for K.L. Rahul as he captained India to victory for the first time in Tests in the opening match against Bangladesh here. The margin of victory – 188 runs – was comprehensive, but it didn't come easy, for the home side put up a spirited fight in the second innings.

"You are never going to get a win that is easy," said Rahul, who had also led in the Johannesburg Test in January against South Africa that India lost.

"We have played enough cricket to understand that there will be phases when the opposition plays well and we need to respect that.

"I am very proud that throughout the Test our energy and intensity were really high. We hadn't played Test cricket for a while and there was a worry coming in about how the bodies would react... spending so much time in the park while maintaining our intensity and focus. We did that really well and that's very pleasing."

Standouts: Kuldeep Yadav, the Player-of-the-Match, and Cheteshwar Pujara, the Most Valuable Player. AFP

Bowling Bangladesh out for 150 in the first innings was key, felt Rahul. "It gave us a lot of time. If Bangladesh had got 300, 350 this game was headed for a draw.

"We would have tried to make a game out of it, but it would have been hard. Getting them out early in the first innings really set us up."

The 30-year-old felt it was a near-complete performance. "There are areas where we can improve, but I'll take the win. Everyone performed and did their jobs. Kuldeep [Yadav] and [Mohd.] Siraj bowled really well in the first innings."

"In the second innings, Axar [Patel] bowled very well but Ashwin and Kuldeep kept up the pressure. Umesh [Yadav] and Siraj too. Overall it was good and this is what we wanted to do as a team.

"Batters who got starts and bowlers who got a couple of wickets will be looking forward to the next Test," added Rahul, who scored 22 and 23, and rushed to practise at the nets immediately after his media duties.

Bangladesh taps uncapped Nasum for second Test

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Bangladesh on Sunday called up uncapped left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed and left out injured pace bowler Ebadot Hossain for the second Test against India starting here on December 22.

"Ebadot received an injury on his back in the first Test. He will not be fit for the second Test," said selector Habibul Bashar.

" That's why we took Nasum in his place though we are yet to decide whether we would play an extra spinner

Nasum has played four ODIs and 28 T20Is but is yet to play a Test.

Batsman Anamul Haque and pace bowler Shoriful Islam were also left out.

The squad:

Zakir Hasan, Najmul Hossain, Mominul Haque, Yasir Ali, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan (capt.), Liton Das, Nurul Hasan, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Khaled Ahmed, Mahmudul Hasan and Rejaur Rahman Raja.

Proud moment

We are the best! The Indian hockey team celebrates after pipping host Spain 1-0 in the final to clinch the inaugural FIH Women's Nation's Cup in Valencia on Saturday. Hockey India has announced a cash reward of ₹2 lakh per player and ₹1 lakh each for the support staff. FIH

How gritty Devika overcame slew of setbacks to win her blue shirt back

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MUMBAI

Devika Vaidya had nearly given up. Her last One-Day International for India was in 2018. Her only Twenty20 International in 2014. Her dreams of getting the Team India blue shirt back suffered a series of setbacks, beginning with an injury in 2017 and a chikungunya affliction.

She lost her mother, who was her strongest pillar of support and sole confidant. And, the Covid-19 pandemic made her mother's absence all the more unbearable. But, the 25-year-old from Pune clutched onto the dream that kept her going.

She wanted to win a World Cup – "Two actually," she corrects herself – and put her heart and soul into getting back into the Indian team. On the domestic circuit, she bowled her leg-breaks, kept the scoreboard ticking and fielded as if her life depended on it.

Devika Vaidya. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

There was one particular game that brought the best out of her. At the Senior Women's T20 Challenger Trophy in Raipur last month, playing for India-B, she came in at 57 for four, chasing 141 against India-C. Then came a remarkable innings (41 not out off 27 balls) that guided her side to victory.

Chief selector Neetu David was among those who watched her brilliant effort. Devika was back in the Indian team for the T20Is against Australia.

In the second match of the series at Navi Mumbai's D.Y. Patil Stadium, she hit a four off the last ball and helped India tie the match. India then won the Super Over in front of more than 45,000 excited fans.

On Saturday night, she made 32 and added 72 for the fourth wicket with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur to keep India in the chase of a daunting target. India went on to lose that game by seven runs, though.

She also picked up three wickets in a series in which Australia has been very reluctant to give them away. Only once in four innings have the visitors lost more than three wickets.

The smile is back!

The smile is back on Devika's face. The tough times are behind her. "Playing cricket was an escape because I didn't want to go home (without my mother)," says Devika. "I didn't want to get used to the fact that she was not there."

She had tried to escape reality then. Now she is back on track to turn her dream into reality.

Ashwin pips Arya in a thriller to take the LGB Formula 4 crown

MOTORSPORTS

Rayan Rozario
COIMBATORE

Ashwin Datta of Dark Don Racing struck a fine double to clinch the crown in the premier Formula LGB4 class of the 25th JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship (JKNRC) at the Kari Motor Speedway on Sunday.

Datta started on a strong note winning the opening race. It did a world of good as he was back in contention for the prestigious title. Going into the final race, it was just a couple of points that separated him from championship leader Viswas Vijayaraj (Ahura Racing) and teammate Arya Singh.

Sharing a laugh: Dark Don Racing's Ashwin Datta, right, and Arya Singh, left, with Sanjay Sharma, Head of Motorsports, JK Tyre. S. SIVA SARAVANAN

But, Ashwin was determined to finish on top. Starting fourth on the grid, he upped his pace and quickly moved to the second spot and, further pressed the pedal to take the lead. There was no catching him up as he had built a sizeable lead. But with five laps to go, the safety car came in and put the pressure back on Ashwin. Arya cashed in on the chance to go past Ashwin in the penultimate lap, but the latter took him by surprise with a clever move on the inside of C-3 in the final lap to take the checkered flag and the title.

The results (Provisional, final day): LGB Formula 4: Race 1: 1. Ashwin Datta 19:43.958; 2. Arya Singh; 3. Tijil Rao (all from Dark Don Racing). Race 2: 1. Ashwin Datta 27:46.956, 2. Saran Vikram Tmars (Mars Racing), 3. Arya Singh.

JK Tyre Novice Cup: 1. Dhruvh Goswami (MSport) 15:47.703; 2. Kyle Kumaran (DTS Racing); 3. Arjun Syam Nair (Momentum Motorsports).

JK Tyre Endurance League: 1. V. Abhishek & Amarnath Menon 59:59.976; 2. Jeofrey Reviven & E. Johan Reeves; 3. Jayanth Prathipati & Alwin Sundar.

JK Tyre RE Continental GT Cup: 1. Sudheer Sudhakar 14:00.738, 2. Anish D Shetty, 3. Allwin Xavier.